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NATIONAL REVIEW

NOVEMBER 10, 2003 VOL. LV, NO. 21

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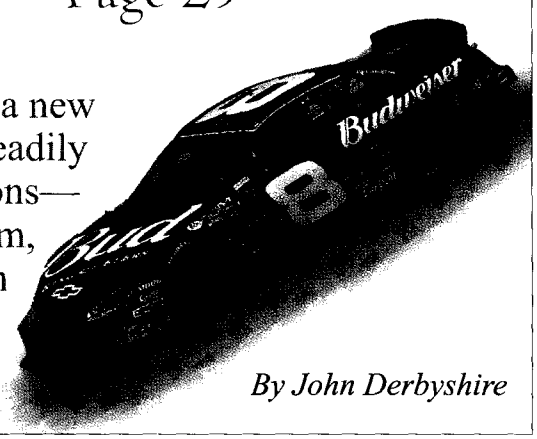
■ COVER STORY

NASCAR Nation

Page 29

The candidates of 2004 have fixed their sights on a new quarry: the NASCAR Dad. He has been voting steadily Republican in recent elections for "cultural" reasons—reasons having to do with guns, religion, patriotism, and lifestyle. What, exactly, is his connection with NASCAR? In the hope of finding out, I recently attended a race at the Talladega track in Alabama.



By John Derbyshire

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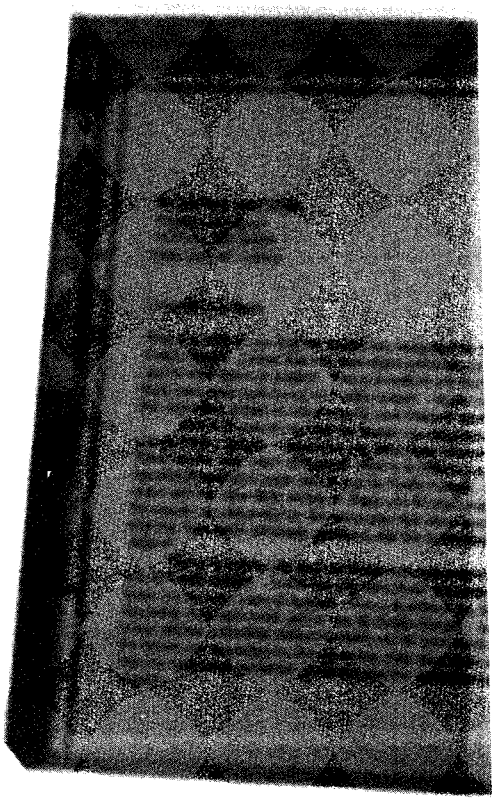

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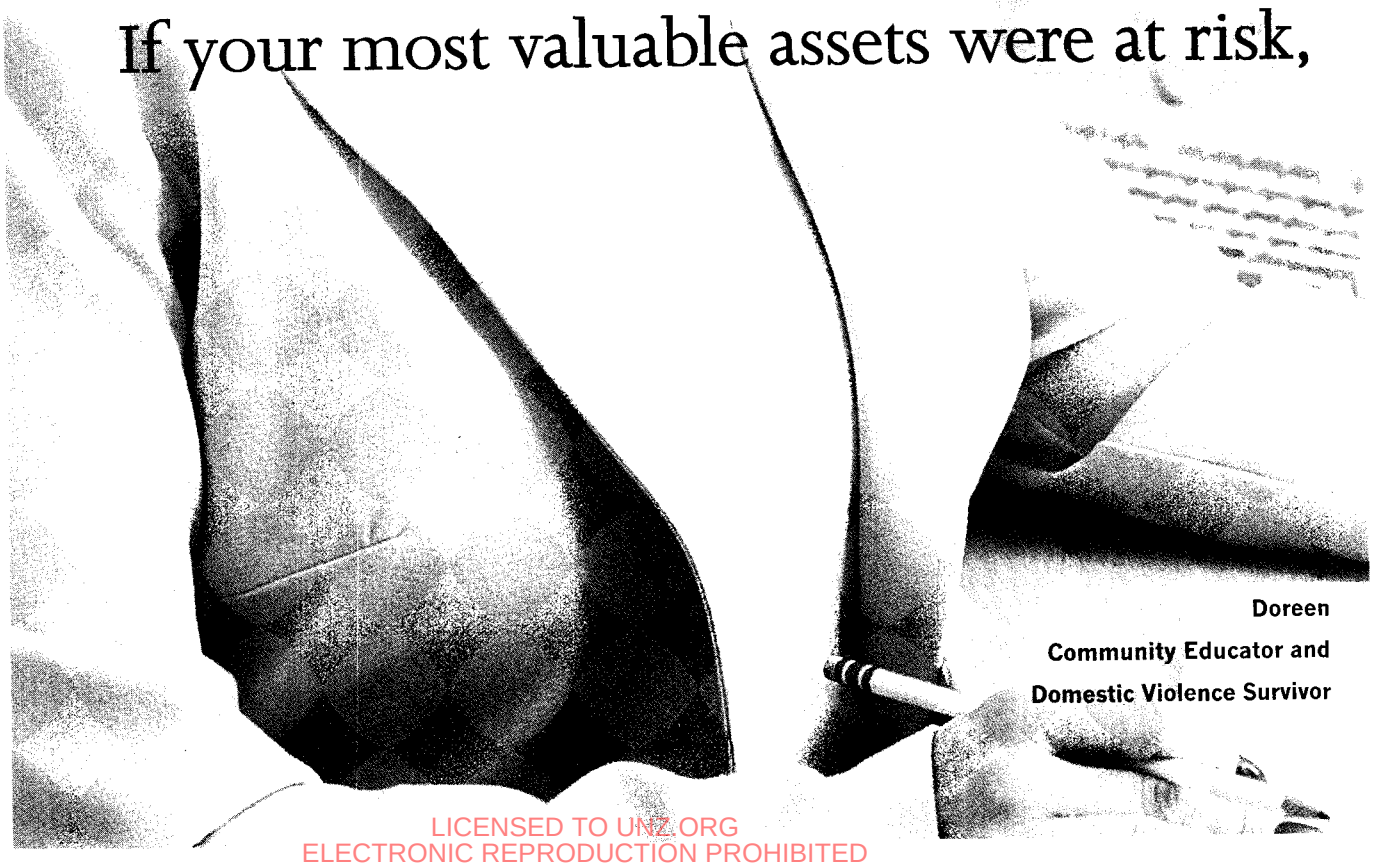

Doreen
Community Educator and
Domestic Violence Survivor

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Domestic Violence affects 1 in every 4 women.

It costs American businesses over $3 billion each year.

And your company can be part of the solution.

Domestic violence is the leading cause of injury to women in our country, and its impact extends from the home to the workplace. The result? Shattered lives and billions of dollars in business losses annually due to absenteeism, turnover, medical expenses and lower productivity.

That's why helping victims of domestic violence is your business. Your company can change lives by building awareness of the issue and providing a link to information about resources in your community.

Let your employees know their safety is important. A few steps can make all the difference to your business — and to someone like Doreen.

wouldn't you protect them?

To learn how to implement a domestic violence workplace policy in your company, please visit:
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If you or one of your employees needs help, contact the National Domestic Violence Hotline:
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letters to the editor

CAN'T WIN WITHOUT RUNNING

There is an interesting coincidence in two of the items in your Sept. 29 issue. In "For the Record" you note that Arkansas governor Mike Huckabee and former congressman Asa Hutchinson—both Republicans—are declining to run against Democrat Blanche Lincoln for her seat in the Senate. Meanwhile, in Nevada, Congressman Jim Gibbons has opted not to run against Sen. Harry Reid. This important and disillusioning news is followed four pages later in "The Week" by your editorial paragraph proclaiming the GOP's need to take more seats in the Senate, so as to defeat the Democratic filibusters of top-rank judicial candidates like Miguel Estrada.

If our Republicans don't have the guts to run for office in races we should win, how do you expect the GOP to add to its majority in the Senate? "Victory is very, very, very important," you say. Yes, but first the GOP must deserve victory.

James Phillips
Folsom, Calif.

STRAIGHT FROM THE BOTTLE

Being stationed in Iraq has a few drawbacks, one of which is untimely delivery of NATIONAL REVIEW. I read, with some amusement, the bit about the British group's claim that fluoridated water violates Islam ("The Week," Sept. 29). As I write, I am looking at a bottle of water, packaged in Bahrain, prominently advertising "With Fluoride." Apparently, the Islamic Medical Association's press release on the issue has not made its way to the offices of the Bahrain Water Bottling & Beverages Co. And take this piece of advice from an experienced soldier over here: Water straight from the Euphrates is neither "holy [nor] blessed [nor] healthy [nor] safe."

Captain Justin Fregia
Baghdad, Iraq

Captain Fregia, and others, may wish to know that NR *subscribers can now gain access to the whole magazine online at www.NationalReview.com. Online-only subscriptions are also available. Please see* NRO *for details.—Eds.*

FASCISTS LEFT AND RIGHT

Victor Davis Hanson's account of the twisted and laughably contradictory mindset of our campus commissars displays his usual array of insight, historical knowledge, and firsthand experience ("Topsy-Turvy," Oct. 13).

However, his repeated use of "right wing" and "McCarthyite" to describe the world's current crop of murderous villains is unfortunate. These clowns—with the possible exception of Milosevic—are fascists in the Stalinist/leftist/socialist mold. Let's not forget that even Hitler himself was not a "rightist" but a National Socialist who very much admired the tactics of Lenin and Stalin.

Hanson should not give the Left more credit than it deserves by mislabeling our modern miscreants. "Fascist" is a neutral enough term for the sensitive, describing as it does a methodology more than an ideology.

R. W. Cornelia
Amagansett, N.Y.

HANDY AND DANDY

How very thoughtful of you to present John Derbyshire's excellent glossary ("From 'Activist' to 'Warmonger'") in a handy, easy-to-tear-out-and-post centerfold section of NR.

Richard Sproc
Chicago, Ill.

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An Assured National Defense

In the first decade of the 20th century, "globalization" was a popular concept. Leading thinkers believed that nations having extensive trade with each other would never imperil those economic gains with war.

Then came World War I. America quickly learned that "globalization" means "dependent."

Almost overnight, the British blockade of German exports cut 90 percent of the U.S. supply of dyes, plus pharmaceuticals, and related chemicals needed to made explosives. Soon, aspirin was in short supply. Luminal needed to treat epileptic seizures was unavailable. A shortage of Novocain and other anesthetics forced doctors and dentists to operate without painkillers.

Eventually, the U.S. government seized more than 13,000 German patents and licensed them to domestic producers. But, the Germans had often left critical details out of their patent filings, making their use difficult and sometimes impossible.

President Woodrow Wilson, an ardent free trader, expressed the lesson-learned about such foreign dependency in his 1919 State of the Union message to Congress,

"The experiences of the war have made it plain in some cases too great a reliance on foreign supply is dangerous and that in determining certain parts of our tariff policy domestic considerations must be borne in mind which are political as well as economic. ... Our complete dependence upon German supplies before the war made the interruption of trade a cause of exceptional economic disturbance."

Following World War I, the United States put high tariffs on many chemical imports and developed a strong chemical industry, which helped the Allies win World War II.

Today, the globalization lesson of World War I seems lost to this generation of leaders. U.S. companies are being encouraged to shift their factories offshore. U.S. defense contractors are being encouraged to buy components at the lowest price, regardless of where made.

Consequently, thousands of the compnents used in both U.S. commercial and military products come from China, the nations closely surrounding it, and other far away places.

For two centuries, Congress has safeguarded U.S. security by requiring that the Defense Department purchase certain vital goods only from factories operating in the United States.

Earlier this year, Chairman Duncan Hunter (R-CA) of the House Armed Services Committee sponsored legislation, now approved in the U.S. House of Representatives, to expand those "Buy America" laws. Today, Chairman John Warner (R-VA) and the Senate Armed Services Committee are considering whether the "Buy America" laws should be strengthened.

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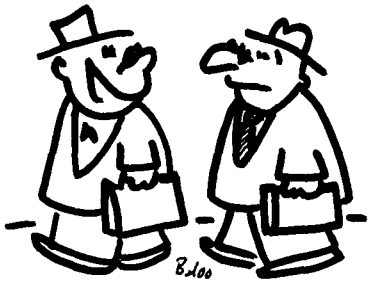

"If you want to do something bipartisan, let's go drinking and womanizing."

■ In CNN/*USA Today* poll, President **Bush** earns 56 percent approval rating, and 53 percent say they support his reelection. . . . In ABC News/*Washington Post* poll, 54 percent say Iraq "was worth fighting," but 59 percent say there's been "an unacceptable number of U.S. military casualties." . . . Bush: "Who can possibly think that the world would be better off with **Saddam Hussein** still in power?" . . . "When you become the president, you cannot predict all the challenges that will come," says Bush. "But you do know the principles that you bring to the office, and they should not change with time or with polls." . . . Vice President **Cheney** at Heritage Foundation: "We are applying the Bush doctrine: Any person or government that supports, protects, or harbors terrorists is complicit in the murder of the innocent and will be held to account." . . . Sen. **Ted Kennedy** (D., Mass.): "The president's war has been revealed as mindless, needless, senseless, and reckless. We should never have gone to war in Iraq when we did, in the way we did, for the false reasons we were given. . . . Iraq was not a breeding ground for terrorism. Our invasion has made it one." . . . Former secretary of state **Madeleine Albright**, on French radio: "It's difficult to be in France and criticize my government. But I'm doing so because Bush and the people working for him have a foreign policy that is not good for America, not good for the world."

■ Rep. **Dennis Kucinich** (D., Ohio) on why he's seeking Democratic nomination for president: "To enable the goddess of peace to encircle within her arms all the children of this country and all the children of the world." . . . Former defense secretary **William Cohen**, on CNN: "There was friction between General [Wesley] **Clark** and myself. And frankly, I think it would be inappropriate for me to comment on his political aspirations. I made a judgment during the time that he was serving as head of NATO and I felt that the ax, as such, when it fell, spoke for itself." . . . Sen. **John Kerry** (D., Mass.), on ABC: "This administration has alienated people all across this planet. . . . They have, in fact, made America less safe. . . . We have this fraudulent coalition, and I use the word 'fraud.' It is a fraudulent coalition. It's a few people here, a few people there. It's basically the British and, most fundamentally, the United States of America." . . . **George Will** to Kerry, on ABC: "Are you conceding that the middle-class portion of the president's tax cut was and is valid?" Kerry: "Yes." . . . Former governor **Howard Dean** (D., Vt.): "I tell you what we need in America. What we don't need are middle-class tax cuts." . . . Sen. **Joe Lieberman** (D., Conn.) calls for 5 percent "surtax" on upper-income Americans. . . . Lieberman, on CNN: "The Bush administration has not kept its promise to uphold the honor and integrity of the White House." . . . Former first lady **Barbara Bush** on Democrats challenging her son, according to New York *Daily News*: "a sorry lot."

■ Bush raises $84 million for reelection, with goal of reaching $170 million. . . . Sen. **Don Nickles** (R., Okla.) says he won't run again, setting stage for close race. . . . Rep. **David Dreier** (R., Calif.) considers challenging Sen. **Barbara Boxer**. . . . In Quinnipiac University poll, 46 percent say Sen. **Arlen Specter** (R., Pa.) should be reelected and 41 percent say it's time for someone else. . . . Democrats await word from Sen. **John Breaux** (D., La.) and Sen. **Bob Graham** (D., Fla.) on whether they will seek reelection. . . . Rep. **Vic Snyder** (D., Ark.) joins Sen. **Orrin Hatch** (R., Utah) in proposing constitutional amendment making immigrants eligible for presidency. Says Snyder, in *Contra Costa Times*: "If the people want to call it the Schwarzenegger bill, that's fine with me." . . . In *Newsweek* poll, 64 percent oppose such an amendment.

■ In survey covering 171 health-related interest groups, congressional staffers rank National Right to Life Committee as 8th most influential, with Planned Parenthood coming in 12th and NARAL 14th. . . . In 14 states, more than 40 percent of marriages are civil weddings conducted by judges, reports Focus on the Family. . . . National security adviser **Condoleezza Rice**: "It is unacceptable that Cuba remain in the state that it does in this hemisphere at a time when democracy and freedom and prosperity are within grasp. . . . It should not be that the Cuban people are forgotten." . . . Rep. **Xavier Becerra** (D., Calif.) introduces bill to create National Museum of the American Latino as part of Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C.

■ Japanese defense minister **Shigeru Ishiba**, in *New York Times*: "The country that would defend Japan at the time of crisis is Japan's only ally, the U.S." . . . Argentina restores diplomatic ties with Cuba, following two-and-a-half year rupture. . . . London's *Daily Telegraph* reports that **Mussolini** asked Pope **Pius XI** to excommunicate **Hitler** in 1938, according to recently discovered Vatican documents.

■ Sen. **Zell Miller** (D., Ga.) on Dean, in new autobiography, *A National Party No More: The Conscience of a Conservative Democrat* (according to *Roll Call*): "Clever and glib, but deep this Vermont pond is not." **NR**

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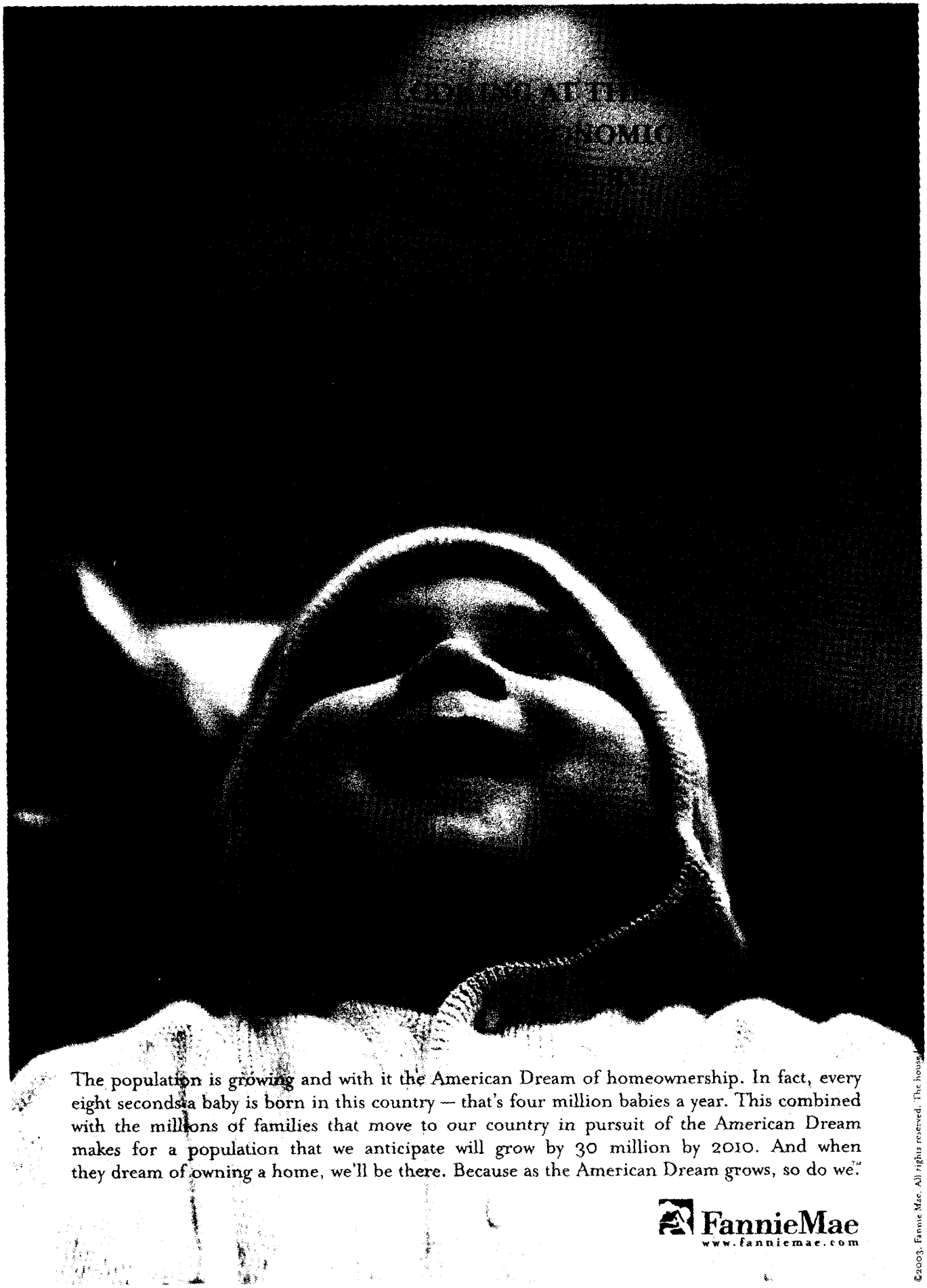

The population is growing and with it the American Dream of homeownership. In fact, every eight seconds a baby is born in this country — that's four million babies a year. This combined with the millions of families that move to our country in pursuit of the American Dream makes for a population that we anticipate will grow by 30 million by 2010. And when they dream of owning a home, we'll be there. Because as the American Dream grows, so do we.™

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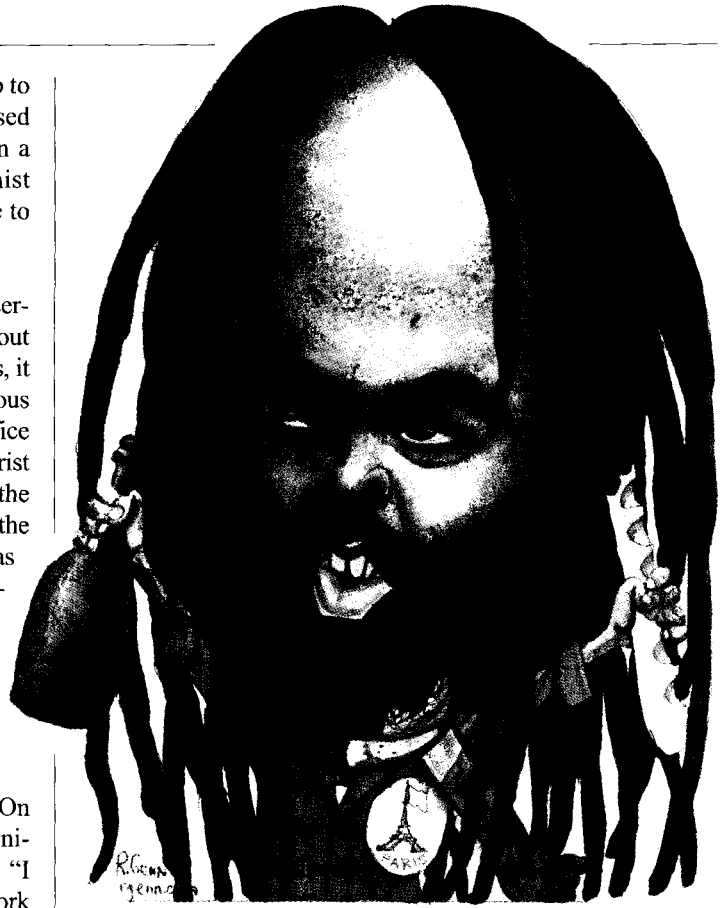
THE WEEK

■ NEWS ITEM: "Washington governor Gary Locke's trip to China bore its first fruit Monday with news that a Kent-based printing-press maker signed a contract worth $11 million a year with the *People's Daily* newspaper, the Communist Party organ." Hmm . . . well, the *People's Daily* might be to the right of the Seattle papers.

■ Bill Clinton, settling further into his role as Second-Guesser-in-Chief, said that he warned incoming President Bush about the threat from Osama bin Laden. If Clinton actually did this, it was helpful, although not nearly as helpful as taking serious action against bin Laden's network during his time in office would have been. In early 2001, Bush faced a grave terrorist threat that had become steadily graver because of what the Clinton administration had done and left undone during the 1990s—the CIA had been prevented from recruiting overseas agents, the FBI had been further hamstrung, immigration policy had been loosened, airport security had remained lax, and bin Laden's terrorist conspiracy had been allowed free and easy sanctuary in Afghanistan. If he had really been trying to help, Bill Clinton would have given Bush another warning: "I've left the nation in great danger."

■ Funny how quickly Wesley Clark changes his mind. On January 22, 2002, addressing an audience at Harding University in Searcy, Ark., Clark had the following to say: "I tremendously admire, and I think we all should, the great work done by our commander in chief, our president, George Bush." A little more than eight months earlier, speaking in Little Rock, he was even more effusive: "President George Bush had the courage and the vision . . . and we will always be grateful to President George Bush for that tremendous leadership and statesmanship." Would this be the same President Bush whom Clark now presents as unfit? Clark is, of course, entitled to revise his opinions. Both Bush-praising speeches pre-date the Iraq intervention, and perhaps Clark's view of the president has dimmed—genuinely. But at the very least, these speeches limit the scope of criticism that Clark can reasonably raise against Bush, and make it appropriate to ask whether Clark is a man of principle or a mere opportunist.

■ It has become fashionable in certain quarters to blame President Bush for causing a kind of fiscal Armageddon with his tax cuts and his defense-spending increases. So it was refreshing to hear Sen. John McCain, appearing on a recent edition of *Meet the Press*, say, "I think the elephant in the room is Medicare and Social Security, and the first baby boomer is going to retire in 2010." In the same program, McCain argued for spending what is needed to strengthen America's armed forces and stabilize Iraq. Here are priorities as they should be: Before all else, government must defend against foreign threat.



ROMAN GENN

The newest, official Parisian (see page 12)

Entitlement programs are comparatively a luxury, and now, during wartime, it is more appropriate than ever to seek their reform. Regrettably, Senator McCain also lapsed into clichés about the need for Bush to veto "terrible pork-barrel-spending bills." This observation is true, but not particularly helpful, as pork accounts for a tiny portion of overall spending. On the whole, however, Senator McCain acquitted himself admirably.

■ Perhaps the Bush administration should just admit the error of its ways and turn over Iraqi reconstruction to Rep. Henry Waxman. Come to think of it, that is precisely what Waxman is proposing. For months now, the California Democrat has accused the administration of cronyism and, possibly, corruption in the decision to award some Iraq contracts to Halliburton, the giant services company that used to be run by Vice President Dick Cheney. Now, Waxman has transformed his anti-administration crusade into legislation, the "Clean Contracting in Iraq Act." The bill would essentially throw out the government's contracting practices when it comes to Iraq and would in effect make Henry Waxman a part of the contracting process. Waxman's proposal would require the executive branch to notify the chairman or the ranking member of relevant congres-

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Five Forgotten Schools

John E. Chubb is chief education officer, Edison Schools; distinguished visiting fellow, Hoover Institution; and member, Hoover's Koret Task Force on K–12 Education.

The increasing demand for charter schools, and the educational options they provide, has been elevated by the belief that urban schools need dramatic improvement. But why hasn't this push produced more results? **The story of five forgotten schools serves as one example of the hypocrisy of some school reform**—opponents of major change claiming they want to improve schools but being satisfied with merely blocking change.

In December 2000, at the prodding of former mayor Rudolph Giuliani, the New York City Board of Education made national headlines by initiating a bold reform to improve five of its most chronically poor-performing schools. The schools were to be partnered with a private manager to turn them around. Edison Schools, Inc., had been selected, after a lengthy review process involving multiple applicants, to run PS 161 in Harlem, PS 66 in the Bronx, and MS 320, MS 246, and IS 111 in Brooklyn.

But there was one stipulation. The parents at each school had to vote to approve the initiative. In no time local activist organizations and the city teachers union, all with vested interests in keeping the schools under direct board control, launched a noisy campaign of misinformation, denouncing Edison as a profiteer, the mayor as an enemy of public education, and the board as a bunch of backroom dirty dealers. The initiative was voted down in all five schools.

Lost in the debate was the tragic disservice these schools were doing to children. In January 2001, while activists were defending the schools against outside intervention, the schools were quietly failing most of their students. On average only 19 percent at each school achieved proficiency on the New York state reading assessment. Of course, the protesters promised to work for the schools' improvement after the voting was over.

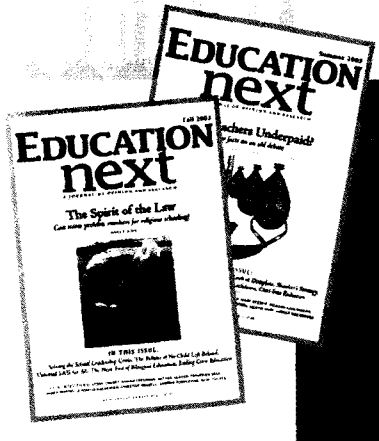
But what happened? One school, IS 111, was closed and another, MS 320, was reconstituted. **The four schools that remain open in their new or original forms continue to fail their students miserably.** Two years later reading proficiency rates have improved only 4 percentage points on average.

Meanwhile, Edison has been working with community groups elsewhere in the state—the Bronx, Buffalo, Rochester, Albany, and Riverhead—to open six charter schools. These schools serve children with high levels of economic need whose test scores two years ago looked just like the scores in the five New York City schools. But today, those charter schools have taken their students to promising heights, raising their state reading scores an average of 17 percentage points. One has to wonder whether this kind of progress could have come to the five schools, now sadly forgotten, in New York City.

The New York City Board of Education has been dissolved, replaced by direct mayoral control of the schools. The new chancellor, Joel Klein, is not beholden to any of the groups that squelched the partnership with Edison. The politics of school reform now hinges on the support for Mayor Mike Bloomberg, who appoints the chancellor. Thus far Chancellor Klein has shown tremendous resolve to buck the status quo, maintain a focus on children at all costs, and embrace ideas his predecessors found too hot to handle. For the sake of the hundreds of troubled New York City public schools, let's hope he keeps it up.

— John E. Chubb

Paid for by the Hoover Institution, Stanford University.



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sional committees—that would be Waxman on the House Government Reform Committee—of contracts or task orders valued at more than $1 million. And it would require the administration to quickly hand over unredacted copies of all documents involved in the contracts upon the request of . . . Henry Waxman. It should be remembered that Waxman has not found any evidence of any improper conduct on the administration's or on Halliburton's part. There is, in fact, good reason to think that Halliburton is the best company for the job and got the contracts by standard and accepted contracting practices (see Byron York's "All Smoke, No Fire," NR, July 14, 2003). Of course, that's never stopped Waxman before.

■ In 1991, Texas Democrats gerrymandered the state's congressional districts without shame or hesitation. In 2001, it was time to redraw the district lines. The legislature failed to do so, and a court stepped in with new lines that left the map mostly the same. As a result, Democrats hold 53 percent of the state's congressional seats even though Republican candidates won 56 percent of the vote last year. Now a Republican state legislature has done some gerrymandering of its own. This looks like the normal political tug-of-war to us, but parts of the national press—the *Washington Post*, the *New York Times*, *The New Republic*—have been comically indignant. The line is that there is a time-honored tradition that redistricting happens only once a decade. Fair enough. But there is also a time-honored tradition that the state legislature, and not the courts, does the job. It may suit liberals' definition of democracy for one of the most Republican states in the nation to send a Democratic delegation to Congress year after year. Nobody else should be upset by the Texas Republicans' handiwork.

■ In 1996, California voters amended the state constitution to ban racial preferences. When the issue came before the state supreme court, the justices unanimously found that the amendment had banned racial preferences. One of those justices, Janice Brown, has now been nominated to a federal appeals-court judgeship by President Bush. The Democrats are attacking her for her decision in the preferences case. Black Democrats are comparing Brown, who is black herself, to Clarence Thomas—and they don't mean that as a good thing. Brown has a justified reputation for following the law rather than rewriting it from the bench. When she ran for reelection, that reputation earned her the endorsement of the liberal *San Francisco Chronicle*. If the Democrats continue to block her, they will be saying that racial preferences come before the will of the voters, impartial judging, and the rule of law.

■ The Supreme Court is in a sticky situation as it takes up the Pledge of Allegiance. The Ninth Circuit ruled last year that, since the pledge includes the words "under God," asking schoolchildren to recite it would amount to an unconstitutional "establishment of religion." That verdict strikes most people, and most politicians, as secularist extremism. Yet the ruling is plausibly based on the Supreme Court's own doctrines of recent decades. To reconsider those doctrines, and move back toward the actual Constitution as ratified, is probably not on the Court's agenda. If, on the other hand, the Court were to strike down the pledge, it would doubtless spark a public backlash that it does not want. So it will probably find some way, however contrived, to distinguish the instant case from its previous cases, or simply rule that the plaintiff lacks standing to sue. Let the Court find its way through this puzzle. There is no reason for the rest of the nation to wait meekly as it does so. The Ninth Circuit's decision is a case study in the dangers of going along with the federal courts' claims to exclusive ownership of the Constitution. Congress should enact the bill, sponsored by Rep. Todd Akin and Sen. Orrin Hatch, to remove the pledge from the courts' jurisdiction. The Supreme Court, whatever its inclinations, should not have the power to strike the words "under God."

■ The Court let stand a lower-court ruling that enjoins the federal government from punishing doctors who recommend marijuana to their patients. "I can do my job again," said Marcus Conant, a San Francisco AIDS doctor who first filed the case (marijuana can help relieve symptoms of AIDS and chemotherapy). California law says the state will not prosecute patients who obtain marijuana with a doctor's recommendation. Now doctors may legally give such recommendations, though federal law still prohibits growing, supplying, possessing, or using the drug. Well, one step at a time.

■ Lots of women, either for simple cosmetic reasons or as part of reconstructive surgery following mastectomies, want to have silicone breast implants. Eleven years ago, the Food and Drug Administration, under the notorious David Kessler, imposed a moratorium on the sale of these implants. Kessler was reacting to a fact-free campaign of media hysteria about the health risks of these implants. There followed a looting expedition by the trial lawyers, leading at last to a $3.2 billion settlement against the implant manufacturers. Now an FDA advisory panel has recommended that the Kessler ban be lifted, since nobody has been able to find any evidence that silicone breast implants are any more hazardous than other cosmetic surgery. Such complications as sometimes occur were, the panel found, no more frequent or malign than those associated with saline-filled implants, which have never been banned. The FDA rarely fails to act on recommendations from its advisory panels, so the implants should be available again soon. Too late, alas, for the women who have been denied implants this eleven years past; and too late for the employees and shareholders of those manufacturers forced into bankruptcy by the trial lawyers. A triumph of reason over junk science, nonetheless.

■ During the Korean War, Douglas MacArthur wanted to attack Manchuria, and he let that be known to everyone who would listen. That was not U.S. policy, however, and President Truman promptly sacked the great man. During the Cold War—in fact often pretty hot—NATO general Edwin Walker was instructing his troops in the theorems of the John Birch Society. That the U.S. government was 60 percent under Communist control was not the view of the Kennedy administration, and Walker was gone. Flash forward to today. A three-star general, William "Jerry" Boykin, has been lecturing, in public and in

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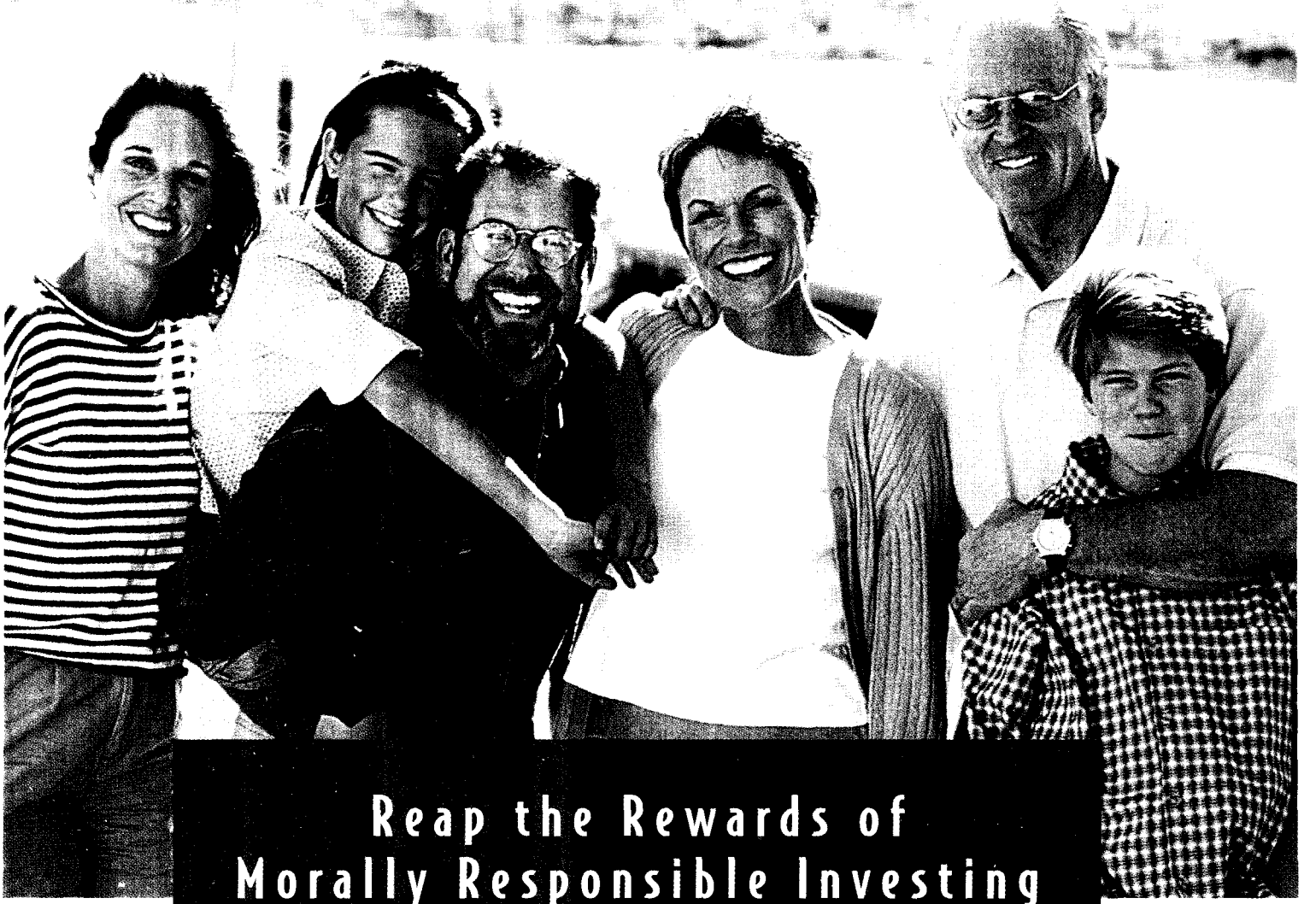

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The Week...

uniform, to the effect that we are in a war with Islam, than whose god his God is bigger, that this is a war against Satan, of whom he has a photograph in the sky above Mogadishu. President Bush has made it national policy that we are not in a war with global Islam. Furthermore, it is hardly good for the morale of troops to understand that their commander is a wacko who goes around photographing Satan zooming overhead. General Boykin is manifestly insubordinate, and should be sacked. Yesterday.

■ There are some bad ideas whose time simply comes, and they become unstoppable. New York City—once known as Babylon on the Hudson, the libertarian Sodom, the place where a couple of C-notes could buy you *anything*, my friend, step this way—banned smoking in its bars and restaurants. Now politically correct Ireland is following suit; and the momentum builds, as the European Commission is making plans to implement a similar ban over the whole Continent. That there is some benefit in stopping people from smoking is undeniable; it will save some lives. Also undeniable, however, is the overall lack of success governments have had in their attempts to discourage the use of similar substances—i.e., drugs and alcohol—through legislation. We should try to resist the momentum for anti-smoking regulations, lest we wake up to find ourselves in a century-long "war on smoking" whose chief accomplishment is raising the price of cigarettes and fostering a new cohort of gangsters.

■ "Mumia is a Parisian!" cried Paris mayor Bertrand Delanoe after conferring citizenship on Mumia Abu-Jamal, the death-row cop-killer. We don't know how it is now, but there were many points in Paris's history when Abu-Jamal would have fit right in: the Commune, the June Days, the Terror . . .

■ The transformation of Osama bin Laden from nightmarish terrorist mastermind to annoying terrorist nuisance continues apace. A new audiotape aired by an Arab TV network in mid October appears to contain bin Laden's voice urging young people in Iraq and neighboring countries to join in holy war against the American "crusaders." With most of his generals dead or in U.S. custody, his bases trashed, his sanctuaries reduced to a few mountain caves in the Hindu Kush, his Saudi sponsors desperately dissociating themselves from him, and his funds sequestered, poor O.b.L. no longer cuts much of a figure. He might still be lethal, though probably only on a small scale, and it would be nice to finish our personal business with him; but in the larger project of draining the Mideast swamp, Osama bin Laden is increasingly an irrelevance.

■ It's a first for a Muslim woman, Shirin Ebadi, to win the Nobel peace prize, which is in the gift of the Norwegians. A lawyer, she has worked for women's rights in Iran, where no such rights exist in public or in private life. As an activist, she has written books and articles to the effect that the values of Islam and democracy can be reconciled, and peacefully too. Recently the Iranian mullahs stopped trying to muzzle her with a prison sentence, and settled instead for a fine. Now they prefer to sound patronizing. President Mohammad Khatami said, "The Nobel peace prize is not that important." There's some truth in that—the last Muslim awarded this prize was Yasser Arafat. The mullahs may also hope to gain some mileage out of Ebadi, who is not really an anti-establishment figure by nature. On the day of the award, she happened to be in Paris, and at an instantly summoned news conference she may not have worn the compulsory head scarf but she made sure to criticize America's intervention in Afghanistan and Iraq. Still, when she flew back to Tehran, 10,000 people turned up at the airport to greet her, in hopeful anticipation that even this symbolic gesture from Norway can only improve what they have to put up with daily.

■ The Catholic Church celebrated the 25th anniversary of John Paul II's papacy, a papacy sufficiently momentous to require reflection by Catholics and non-Catholics alike. When he became Pope, educated elites in the West believed that secularization was the future; and the great reforms of Vatican II were understood to represent a Catholic accommodation to the world. This philosopher-pope insisted to the contrary that neither material comfort nor technological expertise—nor even tyranny—could satisfy the soul's desire for truth, which is to say, for God. He believed that Vatican II pointed the way toward an authentically Catholic *engagement* with the world, with liberal modernity. The Pope became a conservator of what is most valuable in liberalism. Enlightenment liberalism had exalted reason over superstition and the individual over oppression. But by the late 20th century, liberalism had lost its will to resist Communism and lost its faith in reason. The Pope stood up for the dignity of the human person against Communism—and, later, also against the subtler threats of decadence. Against the postmodernists, he asserted the value of reason: reason conceived not in mere instrumental terms, but as a path to wisdom. John Paul produced a stream of impressive encyclicals and a new catechism. He played an important role in the liberation of Eastern Europe, and thus in the victory of the Free World in the Cold War. He renewed his church, bringing into the fold millions of new Catholics in the poorest countries. He canonized hundreds of new saints, as though to teach that saintliness is possible; indeed,

Putin Comes Through

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Say he daily gives the biz
To the jumpy on TV;
It's true, but remember, he
Spent a night in George's pad
At Camp David: Later, Vlad
Read the riot act to Jacques,
Taking Gerhard, like, aback.

—W. H. von Dreele

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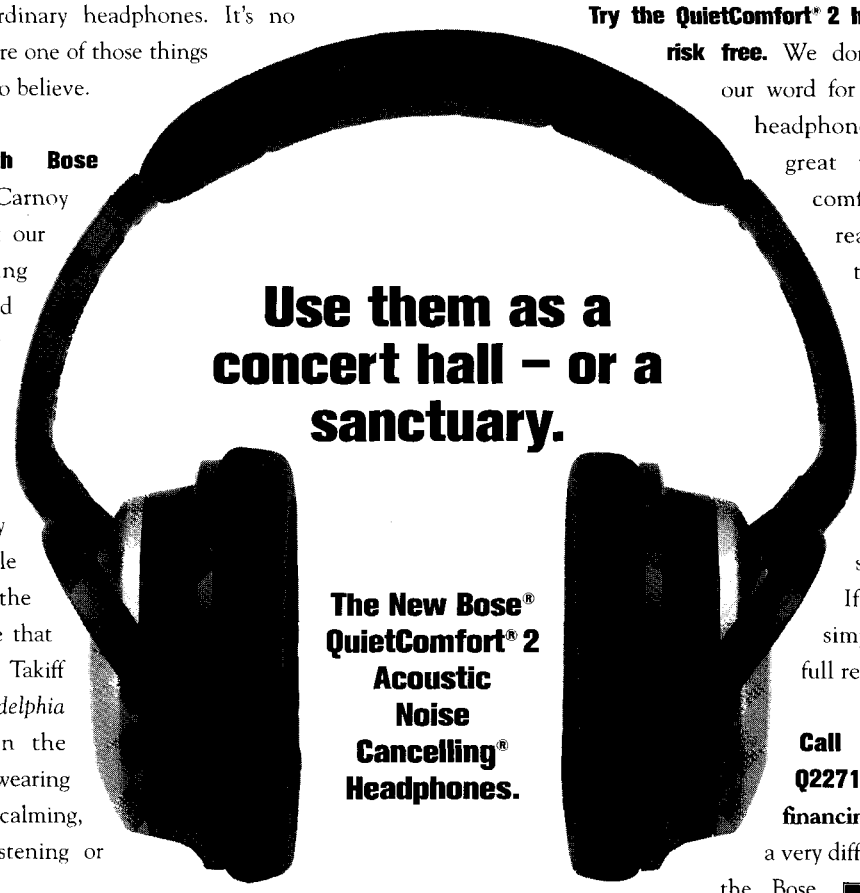

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THE WEEK...

obligatory. Perfection is not possible, however, and it must be said that there are black marks on the Pope's record. The bishops lack discipline and oversight, as the sex-abuse scandals have made all too clear. Church doctrine on foreign policy has not developed much during this papacy. Anyone who has looked to the Vatican during the world crisis of the last two years has not found there anything helpful in reconciling the claims of peace, justice, and prudence. All too often, the desire for peace—defined mistakenly—has compromised the Church's moral witness on tyranny and terrorism. But we do not expect the Pope to be infallible. Contrary to popular impression, he does not claim to be. John Paul says that he has tried to serve God, and His people on earth. His worthiness as a servant is not ours to judge. But we have no doubt that in the future he will be called John Paul the Great.

■ The Episcopal Church, U.S.A., continues to struggle with the issue of openly homosexual clergy. One such, the Rev. Canon V. Gene Robinson, was elected bishop of New Hampshire this summer, to loud protests from conservatives in the Church. At a meeting in Dallas in early October, those conservatives called on the 38 provinces of the international Anglican communion to help them "realign" the E.C.U.S.A. One week later, representatives from 37 of those provinces assembled in London, with Church leaders from the Third World determined to discipline their American co-communicants. At last, however, after several hours of talks, the primates struck a compromise, issuing a statement that condemned the New Hampshire diocese while asking the Archbishop of Canterbury to conduct a formal investigation of the issue and report back in a year. Christians of other denominations must find the dispute baffling. Scripture is perfectly clear that not only homosexual acts, but *all* sex acts outside the sphere of traditional marriage are sinful, and that sinners, after first repenting their sins, should cease sinning. How can a person so obviously unrepentant in such obvious sin become a prelate in a major Christian church? The deeper question is how those ancient Scriptural understandings can be squared with modern notions of "rights" and "discrimination." From that point of view, this unsavory little drama concerns all Christians, not only Episcopalians.

A study in shootings, stabbings, slashings, disembowelings . . .

Quentin Tarantino, in his just-released fourth feature *Kill Bill, Vol. 1*, continues his career-long assault on the weak of stomach. The film, which has produced ecstasies among movie critics and studio executives, is a study in shootings, stabbings, slashings, disembowelings, decapitations, the plucking of eyeballs, the severing of limbs, the biting off of tongues, and the question: How would Lucy Liu's brains look if the top of her skull were sliced off? There's a bit of blood, too. In fairness to Tarantino, the film's stylized butcheries aren't altogether realistic—arguably the most violent section of the movie, for example, is an anime cartoon. And *Kill Bill* is unquestionably a feat of technical brilliance: It is cleverly filmed, and its kung fu sequences possess an almost balletic grace. But the fact that Tarantino has been so richly rewarded for pursuing his perverse fascination with graphic violence should be cause for reflection—about our culture and about ourselves.

■ It is a sad story, and an ugly dispute. Terri Schiavo lost much of her brain function 13 years ago. In October, her husband had her feeding tube removed so that she would die of dehydration. The husband thinks she is, irreversibly, a vegetable. Her parents and siblings think she has some awareness, and that rehabilitation should be given a chance. Each side has its own experts. Schiavo's family says that the husband won a $1.3 million medical-malpractice lawsuit on the assumption that the money would be used to take care of her for the rest of a normal lifespan. They say he wants to inherit what's left of the money that was to be spent on her care—and to marry his fiancée, with whom he has had one child and is expecting another. They even say he may have caused her disablement through abuse. They wanted the State of Florida to intervene, and it did so, forcing the resumption of Mrs. Schiavo's feeding. The legal battle does not appear to be over, however. Being in no position to judge the family's allegations, we can only offer a general thought: that it is one thing to turn down medical interventions that would prolong suffering, and another to withhold food and water. It is the difference between accepting death, and willing it.

■ Rush Limbaugh told his audience that he had indeed become addicted to painkillers following back surgery several years ago, as reported in the press. "I am no victim," he added, "and do not portray myself as such. I take full responsibility for my problem." He checked into a detox facility for 30 days, and promised more details when the cops finish investigating the ring that supplied him. His admirers appreciate his forthrightness and wish him a complete recovery. In a fundamentally just society, the law deserves respect even if particular laws do not. Rush had no good reason for violating that dictum, as he readily admits. He should further reflect on the fact that the pharmacopeia is bursting with legal drugs that can be more harmful than proscribed substances like marijuana. All this is for later, after he is restored to health and has resumed his "excursion into broadcast excellence."

■ Gregg Easterbrook, a writer for *The New Republic*, went off on a weird tangent in the course of an attack on *Kill Bill*. The movie was produced by Miramax, which is owned by Disney. Easterbrook noted that the executives who run Miramax and Disney are both Jewish. He continued, "Yes, there are plenty of Christian and other Hollywood executives who worship

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money above all else, promoting for profit the adulation of violence. Does that make it right for Jewish executives to worship money above all else, by promoting for profit the adulation of violence? Recent European history alone ought to cause Jewish executives to experience second thoughts about glorifying the killing of the helpless as a fun lifestyle choice." The suggestion would seem to be that Jews have a special responsibility not to glorify violence, or at least a special interest in not glorifying it. Taken seriously, that thought implies that Jews who nonetheless glorify violence deserve more blame than non-Jews who do so. You do not have to be thin-skinned, or Jewish, to find that idea offensive. Easterbrook was harshly criticized for his comments. He apologized: "It was terrible that I implied that the Jewishness of studio executives has anything whatsoever to do with awful movies like *Kill Bill*. . . . Where I failed most is in the two sentences about adoration of money. I noted that many Christian executives adore money above all else, and in the 20-minute reality of blog composition, that seemed to me, writing it, fairness and fair spreading of blame. But accusing a Christian of adoring money above all else does not engage any history of ugly stereotypes. Accuse a Jewish person of this and you invoke a thousand years of stereotypes about that which Jews have specific historical reasons to fear. What I wrote here was simply wrong, and for being wrong, I apologize." ESPN.com nonetheless fired him as a columnist. (Perhaps that's poetic justice, given that Easterbrook piled on Rush Limbaugh for his own recent ESPN comments.) The Anti-Defamation League said that Easterbrook's apology was "insufficient" and that he had not rejected "anti-Semitic stereotypes." Then *The New Republic* apologized for running Easterbrook's offending column. Enough already. Easterbrook expressed a foolish thought poorly. But in context it seems clear that he was not saying that Jewish executives are unusually greedy, or greedy because they are Jewish; and his apology rejects those ideas. The apology should be accepted.

■ In one of the most bizarre news judgments ever, CBS ran a two-part exposé of homeschooling, showing cases of children who have been abused, "put in danger," and "even killed while homeschooling," e.g. by murderess Andrea Yates. Of course bad things happen in homes, which have not repealed the fall of man. But where is the proportion? Ask New Yorkers, whose public schools employ security guards and metal detectors in the (vain) effort to keep out knives and guns.

■ The *New York Review of Books* celebrates its 40th anniversary with a special issue, including an essay on George Orwell by novelist John Banville, who ends with a contemporary aside: ". . . in the world today . . . we are caught between on one side the proponents of the Rumsfeld Doctrine of unending conflict . . . and, on the other, radical fundamentalist Islam . . ." Ah, the *NYRB*, "caught between" those who wish to murder them and those who protect them. And Banville praises Orwell, of all people. "There was a time when empires crashed like houses / And many a pink . . . / Was glad enough to cling to Churchill's trousers" (George Orwell, "As One Non-Combatant to Another," June 1943).

■ HOME FRONT: Beginning this issue, Mark Steyn will write a back-page column ("Happy Warrior"). David Frum has a new book coming out in January: *An End to Evil: Strategies for Victory in the War on Terror*, co-authored with Richard Perle. It is all but certain to be another best-seller (and deservedly so). In the meantime, we can read David every morning in his blog on National Review Online, and we welcome Mark Steyn. Frum and Steyn: the best Canadian products since . . . ice and timber, or something.

IRAQ

Tools for the Job

AHMAD CHALABI, who led Free Iraq's delegation to the U.N. early in October, gave a notable speech to the body that did so little to liberate his country. He thanked those who did help: President Bush, the United States, Great Britain. He addressed the ongoing resistance of the losers: "We will not allow a gang limited to mercenaries and terrorists to deprive a person, a society, and a nation of a bright tomorrow." He outlined a vision of that tomorrow, which would not have sounded strange in Philadelphia in 1787: separation of powers, accountability, transparency, federalism, rule of law, and the eschewal of formalized ethnic or sectarian factions. He ended with a challenge: "To those who stood with the dictator and who continue to question the intentions of the American and British governments . . . we invite you to come and visit the mass graves where half a million of our citizens lie, come and visit the dried up marshes, come and visit Halabja where chemicals were dropped on civilians, come and examine the lists of the disappeared. . . . And we the Iraqi people will ask you why you chose to remain silent."

Good question, good hopes. How are the hopes to be secured?

In mid October the Security Council unanimously voted to set its seal of approval on the coalition's reconstruction of Iraq. The United States gave very little, conceding a small political role to the U.N. and requiring the Iraqis to present only a timetable for a new government by December 15, not a new government itself. The Security Council was as graceless as possible, Russia, France, and Germany announcing that "the pace of the transfer of responsibilities to the Iraqi people" should have gone faster. (A lot they cared about the Iraqi people when they were selling arms to Saddam.) The Axis of Weasel will not be sending troops, nor will Pakistan.

The U.N. vote might however shake loose troops from Turkey, as well as international money for reconstruction. Japan has ponied up $1.5 billion for 2004. It gives a symbolic inducement to some politicians in the Labour and Democratic parties, who are unsure whether they can or want to do the right thing.

One day after the Security Council vote, Congress approved most of the administration's $87 billion request for spending on Iraq and Afghanistan, $67 billion of it military. Of Democratic presidential candidates in Congress, Dick Gephardt and Joe Lieberman voted yes; Dennis Kucinich, John Kerry, and John Edwards voted no. Gephardt and Lieberman are in the minority in their party, however—118 of 205 House Democrats voted no. True, only 11 out of 48 Senate Democrats voted no—but nega-

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tivism found a halfway house there, with the Senate voting narrowly to make half of the $20 billion Iraqi aid package a loan. This was a childish exercise in bookkeeping. Great nations pay their way. If their security is at risk, they pay whatever it takes. If they can't, they are no longer great.

Sen. Chuck Hagel greeted the vote with remarks that were part true, part (as is his wont) obnoxious. "There's a great unease about all this reflected across this land. We are getting deeper and deeper into something that we've never been in before in this part of the world." *In this part of the world* is boob bait. Yes, Senator, we have never been in Iraq. But enemies have not struck lower Manhattan for two centuries either. New realities require new responses.

President Bush must however address unease as it arises. Winston Churchill famously asked for the tools, promising that he would do the job. Bush now has all the tools he will get from the U.N. and from Congress. He must convey several not easily harmonized points: that progress is being made in Iraq; that American losses there are, in historical terms, eminently sustainable; that these losses may well continue until a final handover to Iraqis is made, which must not be soon. Finally he must convey that the Terror War is still only begun. Many a bombmaker (Iran) and bankroller (Saudi Arabia) is still out there.

That's what leadership is about.

AT WAR

The Moderate from Malaysia

THE prime minister of Malaysia, Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, is an international superstar—a toast of the Davos forum, a darling of Western correspondents and analysts. He is thought to be the Great Muslim Moderate, and in certain respects he is—which can be most disheartening. Think of his famed political prisoner, Anwar Ibrahim, the former deputy prime minister. Ibrahim has become a rallying point for anti-Mahathir opposition; the prisoner's wife, Dr. Wan Azizah Ismail, has proven a tireless and graceful campaigner for his freedom—a descendant, in a way, of Avital Shcharansky, or Yelena Bonner.

Mahathir is ending his rule, after 22 years. But he has gone out with a bang, delivering the keynote address at the recent Organization of the Islamic Conference powwow, held in his country. At the beginning of his speech, he welcomed non-Muslim "observers at this meeting," saying their "presence . . . will help towards greater understanding of Islam and the Muslims." Perhaps it did—but perhaps not in the way Mahathir intended.

The prime minister delivered an almost perfect example of what has long ailed the Muslim world; it was as though he had set out to confirm the writings of Bernard Lewis and our own David Pryce-Jones. First and foremost, there was the presentation of Muslims as perpetual victims, oppressed by forces possibly not seen, but certainly non-Muslim, and almost certainly Jewish and Western. "We are all Muslims. We are all oppressed. We are all being humiliated." The "enemy" will "attack and kill us, invade our lands, bring down our governments," etc., etc.

The speaker then went into history, sounding, for a moment, actually very much like Professor Lewis: "At the time the Europeans of the Middle Ages were still superstitious and backward, the enlightened Muslims had already built a great Muslim civilization, respected and powerful." Why, "the Europeans had to kneel at the feet of Muslim scholars."

But then The Turn took place, and, "intellectually, the Muslims began to regress." The West wrapped its tentacles around the Islamic world, and "apart from the new nation-states, we also accepted the Western democratic system"—a calamity. (If only it were true—that the Muslim world had been forced to accept the "Western democratic system.")

About mid-speech, Mahathir delivered his strongest poison: regarding "the Zionist transgression." The Muslims are numerous, Mahathir noted: "We are now 1.3 billion strong. . . . We control 50 out of the 180 countries in the world. Our votes can make or break international organizations." And yet "none of our countries are truly independent. We are under pressure to conform to our oppressors' wishes about how we should behave, how we should govern our lands, how we should think, even."

And, really, "1.3 billion Muslims cannot be defeated by a few million Jews. There must be a way." The Jews are very clever, those people. "The Europeans killed 6 million Jews out of 12 million. But today the Jews rule this world by proxy. They get others to fight and die for them. . . . They survived 2,000 years of pogroms not by hitting back, but by thinking. They invented and successfully promoted socialism, communism, human rights, and democracy so that persecution of them would appear to be wrong, so they may enjoy equal rights with others. With these they have now gained control of the most powerful countries, and they, this tiny community, have become a world power."

Mahathir is ending his rule, after 22 years. But he has gone out with a bang.

Mahathir suggested that Muslims learn a trick from the Jews and start thinking: but for the purpose of destroying those very Jews. The prime minister's speech took for granted that the aim of Muslims should be the destruction of these people—interestingly, Mahathir didn't even bother to say "Israelis," out of politeness: He went straight for "Jews"—rather than peaceful co-existence with them. A history and a present of victimhood (at the hands of others); Jews as wily and all-powerful; Muslims as kept from their due place (supremacy) only by lack of unity—the great Dr. Mahathir mixed in every ingredient of the stew that has proven so toxic for Muslim people everywhere.

Later, confronting criticism, his foreign minister snapped, "Forget about anti-Semitism." Ah, but that's hard—and unwise. Israel's own foreign minister said, "The civilized world has seen the results of such violent rhetoric in the past." It will be good to be done with Mahathir. But the chilling question is: Among viable leaders in Muslim countries, is that the best of them?

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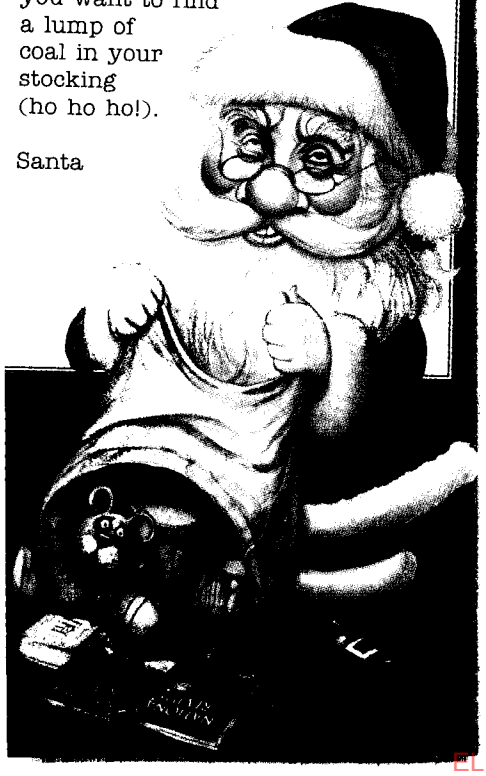
Santa



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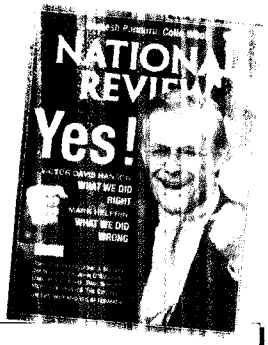

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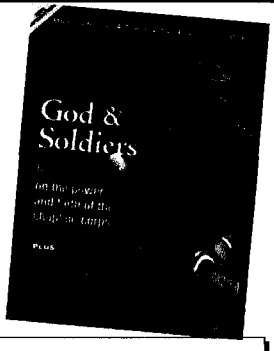

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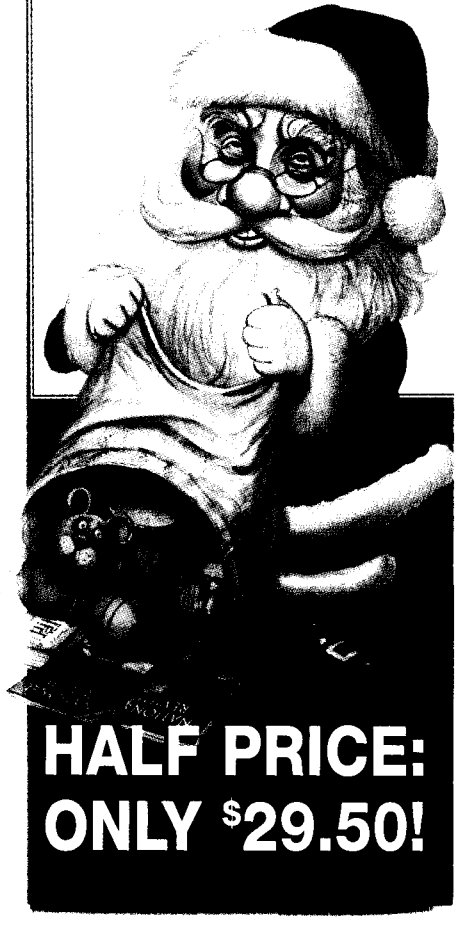

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notes & asides

■ Remarks on awarding the Bradley Prize to Thomas Sowell, October 7, 2003

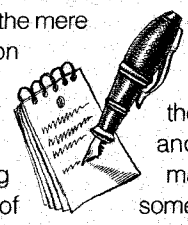
I do not undertake to summarize, or even to list, the thirty books written by Dr. Sowell or the one hundred learned essays or the one thousand newspaper columns. Nor to summarize academic honors and tributes he has been paid, except perhaps any such tribute as especially springs to mind, the most palpable of which is that of the Bradley Foundation.

It is interesting to learn that Dr. Sowell does not give us his annual book because that is the book he has just finished. He writes his books only when he has something on his mind that demands parturition. He writes down that much of it as attracts his thought, and it might sit there for a long time awaiting supplementary exposition. He gave a speech in Switzerland in 1982. It reposed in his mind and in his notes and, seventeen years later, sprang forth as his notable *Basic Economics: A Citizen's Guide to the Economy.*

His writing style is admired by many, among others by the nominators and selection committee for the Bradley Prize. It is admired for its directness and fluency. However resourceful and comprehensive as a scholar, Professor Sowell writes to be read and understood. Not necessarily to persuade, but that failure is not his as a teacher, it is the problem of invincible ignorance. But he does not stop trying, and indeed he often reminds us, as recently in his book *The Quest for Cosmic Justice*, of the futility of grand social and political designs, miscalculated to bring heaven on earth. As much can be said of great intellectual designs for universal knowledge. His study of native cultures, of the migration of peoples, of what they bring with them to their new homelands, of the difficulties in communicating with them in the absence of a knowledge of their cultures, is a great investigative story, illuminatingly set forth. His book *Conquests and Cultures: An International History* testifies to his conquest of our own culture.

Not everyone has experienced him as a teacher and conversationalist. There is no more vivid memory in my own experience than of the Socratic eloquence of Tom Sowell when answering a questioner or confronting a dissident, whether on the public platform or in the living room; or, one supposes, in the classroom. There is a patience there that must have derived from Biblical mandates, because it does not come naturally to Tom Sowell. There are duties in living a role substantially public in nature, and he assumes them, though not always gladly. Writing some time ago about the pains of book reviewing he spoke of the 600-page clunker. "After only 20 pages, it becomes painfully clear that this one is a real dog. The rest of the ordeal is like crossing the Sahara Desert—except that often there are no oases." There is the one compensation, namely that the reviewer "gets to slaughter the author in print at the end of it all, but," he complains, "this merely appeases the desire for revenge, which only real blood would satisfy." Some who have been witness to Tom Sowell on the offensive would not know that what he was causing to flow was anything less than real blood.

In his newspaper columns he is always on the scene to make the necessary points, as when last week Rush Limbaugh was denounced for the mere mention of race in connection with a football player. "The denunciation and demonization of Pat Moynihan," he recalls, "marked a major turning point in public discussion of racial issues. None of those who demonized Daniel Patrick Moynihan has paid any price. But the black community has paid a terrible price because the problem he tried to point out was swept under the rug. Broken homes and children raising children have produced poisonous consequences, from educational failures to drugs and murder."



His emphasis on the need to acquire genuine knowledge and to free one's thinking of cliché and conformity he imposes exemplarily on his own work. His impatience with cant is at every level, from lofty presidential speeches to workaday transgressions of copyeditors. "Some years ago," he recalls, "a copyedited book-length manuscript [of mine] was turned back to me with literally hundreds of little tabs attached to the pages, in addition to the usual stylistic vandalism in the text."

So how did he handle that? "Remembering General MacArthur's warning against getting bogged down in a land war in Asia, I decided not to become engaged with the copyeditor." He just sent a duplicate clean copy of his manuscript to the publisher and told him to get on with the publication of his book.

He recognizes, of course, the little fallibilities in life, one of them being the typographical error. "Typos have an uncanny ability to survive reading and rereading. If there is anything that could survive a nuclear attack, it is probably typographical errors."

Our honoree has always been patient in the matter of his own learning. His early submissions, he informs us, were rejected not as a matter of unrecognized talent. Rather, he says, "it was a case of quickly recognized incompetence. When I first started writing, in my teens, I lived in New York City and worked in downtown Manhattan. That is how I got my rejection slips back so fast. If I had lived out in Podunk, I could have dreamed on, in a fool's paradise, from Monday morning until Thursday or Friday evening before the brutal truth, the rejection slip, caught up with me."

He is entirely philosophical about the travail he has endured as a writer and scholar. "My own experience may not be unusual. I first tried to sell something that I had written when I was 17 years old. I first succeeded when I was 30. I first made any serious money from writing—enough to buy an automobile—when I was 40. I first made enough money from writing in a year to live on for another year when I was 52." And the first time he won a Bradley Prize was when he was 73, but then he had to wait for the Bradley Foundation to decide to offer prizes, and Bradley is only 18 years old.

—WFB

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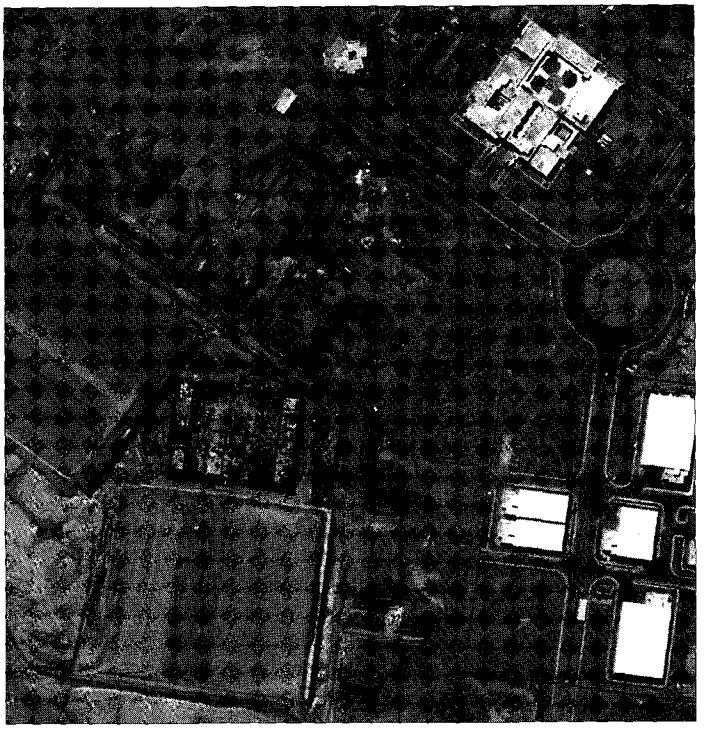

■ THE MIDDLE EAST ■

Of Mullahs and Their Nukes

A deadly problem out of Iran

AMIR TAHERI

UNTIL last spring, it seemed as if Iran and the United States were moving toward a discreet dialogue designed to defuse more than two decades of antagonism. Now, however, with the release of fresh evidence that Iran may be pursuing nuclear weapons, tensions between the old adversaries have reached a new high.

Ask any official in Tehran and you will hear the same thing: Iran does not plan to manufacture nuclear weapons but wants to reserve the right to do so. This is almost word for word what the late shah told a group of scientists and officials in Tehran in 1970, shortly after Iran signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. A few weeks later, the Iranian Atomic Agency was reorganized into a major government department headed by a deputy prime minister.

At the time, the shah's goal was to build 20 nuclear power stations over a ten-year period, producing a total of 30,000 megawatts of atomic energy. The reason was that Iran's energy consumption was expected to triple by the year 2000. At that rate, Iran would have been forced to use practically all of its oil output to generate electricity for domestic consumption, thus losing its single-largest source of foreign currency. The shah also invested in a new company, Eurodif, to find and market uranium in partnership with France, Italy, Spain, Belgium, and Gabon. (It was not until the late 1970s that uranium deposits were found in Iran itself, and thus Tehran initially looked to West Africa as a source of supply.)

By 1976, work on the first of the projected nuclear power stations had started at Bushehr, a peninsula on the Persian Gulf. The station was slated for completion in 1980. In 1977, research began at another nuclear power station at Dar-Khuywayyen, near Ahvaz, in the oil-rich province of Khuzistan. But in 1979, the shah's regime collapsed as Ayatollah Ruhallah Khomeini seized power in Tehran.

One of Khomeini's first acts was to scrap the entirety of the shah's grandiose modernization program—including the nuclear project. In 1983, a squadron of French heavy bombers attacked the Bushehr nuclear power station, damaging its abandoned infrastructure. The planes, painted in Iraqi colors, had been "lent" to Saddam Hussein by the French government and were flown by retired French and Belgian pilots. The raid was presented by then-president Saddam Hussein as retaliation for the destruction of the Iraqi nuclear power station at Osirak in 1981, though everyone knew that Osirak had been knocked out by Israeli Phantom jets painted in Iranian colors.

After Khomeini's death in 1989, his successors decided to revive the late shah's modernization programs. An inspection team dispatched in 1990 by the German company Siemens, which had started building the Bushehr plant before the revolution, reported that it could be revived and completed: Apparently the French pilots had not done as good a job at Bushehr as the Israelis had at Osirak.

Under pressure from Washington, however, the Germans quickly withdrew their offer to complete Bushehr. For almost three years, Iran shopped around, looking for partners to help finish the project. Russia agreed to help, in ex-

AFP/DIGITALGLOBE

Mr. Taheri is an Iranian author of ten books on the Middle East and Islam. He was executive editor of *Kayhan*, Iran's main daily newspaper, from 1972 to 1979.

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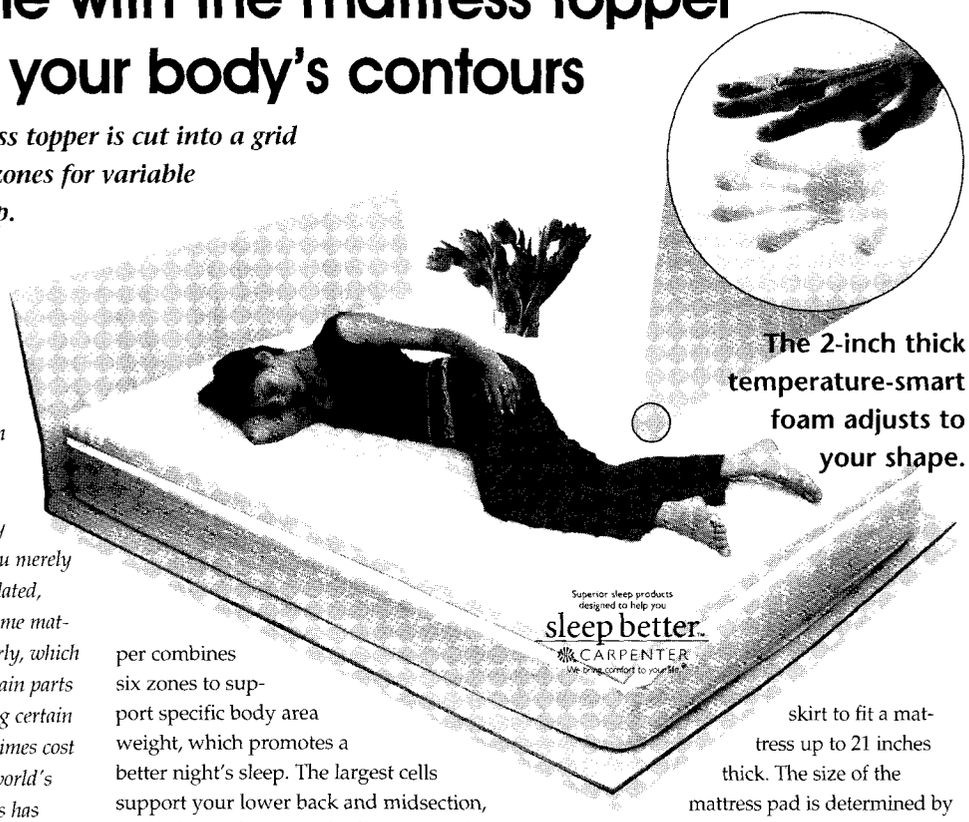

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It's 3 a.m. You have exactly two hours until you have to get up for work, and you still can't seem to fall asleep. At this point, the phrase "tossing and turning" begins to take on a whole new meaning for people whose mattresses simply aren't giving proper support anymore. Your mattress may dictate your quality of sleep. Even if you merely suspect that your mattress may be outdated, that's when you need to take action. Some mattresses fail to support your spine properly, which can result in increased pressure on certain parts of your body. Other mattresses, sporting certain degrees of visco-elastic foam, can sometimes cost you well over $1000. Now, one of the world's leading manufacturers of foam products has developed an incredibly affordable mattress topper that can actually change the way you sleep. Introducing the future of a better night's sleep: The Memory Foam Ultra Mattress Topper.

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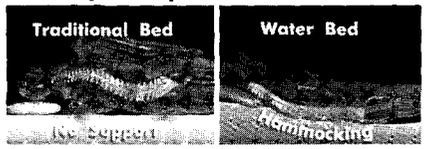

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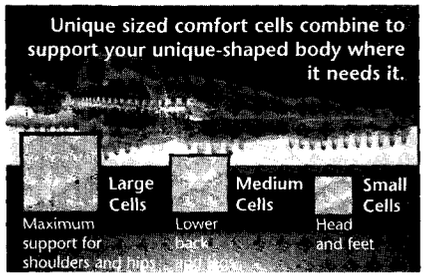
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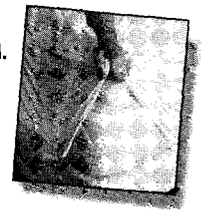

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change for an $800 million contract. And so, by the year 2000, Bushehr was a bustling construction site. Nuclear power from Bushehr is scheduled to enter the nation's electrical network by March 2004.

The U.S. has alleged for some time that Iran has already begun manufacturing atomic bombs and may have up to ten such bombs by 2005. Until recently, international opinion was prepared to give Iran the benefit of the doubt, seeing Washington's position as "typical American bullying." A series of incidents has changed that view. Last March, satellite photos were released showing secret facilities linked to Iran's nuclear program. At one location near Natanz, close to the central Iranian desert, stands a sophisticated facility that produces high-speed centrifuges needed for enriching uranium. To produce a Hiroshima-sized bomb, it takes a maximum of 25 kilos of enriched uranium—for which 1,000 centrifuges are needed. It is estimated that the Natanz facility, when completed, will have the capacity to produce up to 5,000 centrifuges every year.

Even more interestingly, it appears that Iran wants to expand its nuclear options, limited currently to enriched uranium, to include the capacity to produce plutonium—a revival of the two-track strategy devised in the 1970s. To do this, Iran would need to produce heavy water. And the latest satellite photos and other intelligence material show that Iran has built a heavy-water facility at Arak, west of Tehran.

Both the Natanz and Arak facilities represent upper links in a chain of nuclear technology. The first link of that chain is raw uranium, which Iran discovered in the late 1970s in large quantities at Sarcheshmeh, near Kerman, and Magas, in Baluchestan. According to some estimates, Iran has one of the world's largest uranium deposits—large enough to satisfy the country's energy needs and to sustain any weapons programs it might wish to undertake for up to 200 years.

The middle link of the chain consists of nuclear stations like Bushehr, which—using uranium to produce electricity—also manufacture spent nuclear fuel, the raw material for enriched uranium. The highest link, of course, is a bomb-making factory, which Iran may or may not already have. One theory is that Iran will not build such a facility until it has accumulated enough enriched uranium and plutonium for a substantial number of nuclear warheads. Some experts believe that the go-ahead could be given as early as 2005. Others suggest slightly later dates, such as 2010.

As a signatory of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), Iran is obliged to undergo inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Last summer, Iran's credibility was badly shaken when IAEA inspectors found traces of enriched uranium at one of the sites they visited. The Iranians could not explain the presence of special-grade enriched uranium in a country that does not wish to manufacture nuclear warheads. Things worsened when the IAEA was confronted with evidence of the existence of the Natanz and Arak facilities. The question had to be asked: If Iran was not pursuing nuclear weapons, why all the secrecy? Consider Arak. Heavy water has well-known civilian uses: If the production at Arak was entirely innocent, why did Iran choose to conceal its existence? IAEA director Mohamed El-Baradei asked Iran to explain the latest findings.

The Iranians could not explain the presence of special-grade enriched uranium in a country that does not wish to manufacture nuclear warheads.

El-Baradei's plea was followed by a letter signed by the British, French, and German foreign ministers calling on Iran to cooperate with the IAEA and to sign an additional protocol to the NPT allowing impromptu inspections of all suspected sites. The European Union also intervened, promising Iran financial and technological aid for its energy project in exchange for an immediate end to all military-related nuclear programs. Failing that, the EU could employ economic and diplomatic sanctions. Ironically, Washington adopted a softer position: The Bush administration said it would be satisfied if Iran signed the additional protocol to the NPT.

Faced with the EU's surprisingly tough stance, the Iranian leadership met with the foreign ministers of Britain, France, and Germany in Tehran on October 21. The result was an announcement by Hasan Rowhani, secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, that Iran would sign the additional protocol allowing unlimited access to inspectors. Furthermore, Rowhani announced that Iran would, for an "interim period," suspend uranium enrichment "to express its goodwill and create a new atmosphere of trust."

Whether the regime is prepared to alter its long-term nuclear strategy is still an open question. In nuclear policy, the Iranian leadership is facing its toughest dilemma in more than 20 years. On one hand, there is a strong desire to develop an arsenal of nuclear weapons as a national deterrent: Iran is located in a rough neighborhood that includes at least five states with nuclear weapons. On the other hand, pursuing a nuclear program will isolate Iran, lead to new sanctions, and give the United States a pretext not only to destroy Iran's nuclear centers, but even to use a mixture of military and political pressure to topple the regime itself.

That fear is well grounded: Reports suggest that covert action could be used against Iran's nuclear installations. The U.S. has already recruited a number of Mujahedin Khalq elements in Iraq and won a pledge from their leader, Massoud Rajavi, to help with sabotage attacks inside Iran if necessary. If the U.S. and/or Israel were to strike areas in Iran, Tehran would be unable to retaliate except through Lebanese and Palestinian radical groups. The regime would appear weak and vulnerable, thus encouraging domestic opponents who dream of its overthrow.

Imagined as the ultimate weapon to ensure the safety of the mullahs' regime, Tehran's nuclear program is fast developing into a serious threat to the Islamic Republic itself. **NR**

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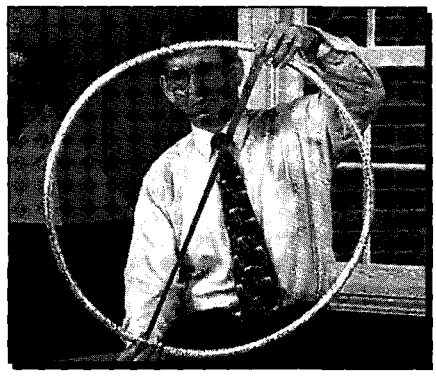

mathematicians. He is Professor of Mathematics and a Distinguished Teaching Professor at The University of Texas at Austin. At UT he has received several awards for outstanding teaching, including the President's Associates Teaching Award, the Jean Holloway Award for Teaching Excellence, and the Friar Society Centennial Teaching Fellowship—awarded to only one UT faculty member each year. A central goal of Professor Starbird's lectures is to teach the concepts of calculus as *ideas* rather than *symbols*.

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■ POLITICS

By George

The Democratic party is now brought to you by super-investor George Soros

BYRON YORK

LAST June, the billionaire investor George Soros announced that he was cutting back the work his foundation, the Open Society Institute, did in Russia so that he could focus his attention on the United States. The change was needed, Soros told reporters in Moscow, because the political scene in America had become "quite dangerous." In the Bush administration, Soros explained, "the executive branch has come under the influence of a group of ideologues who have forgotten the first principle of an open society: that they don't have a monopoly on truth."

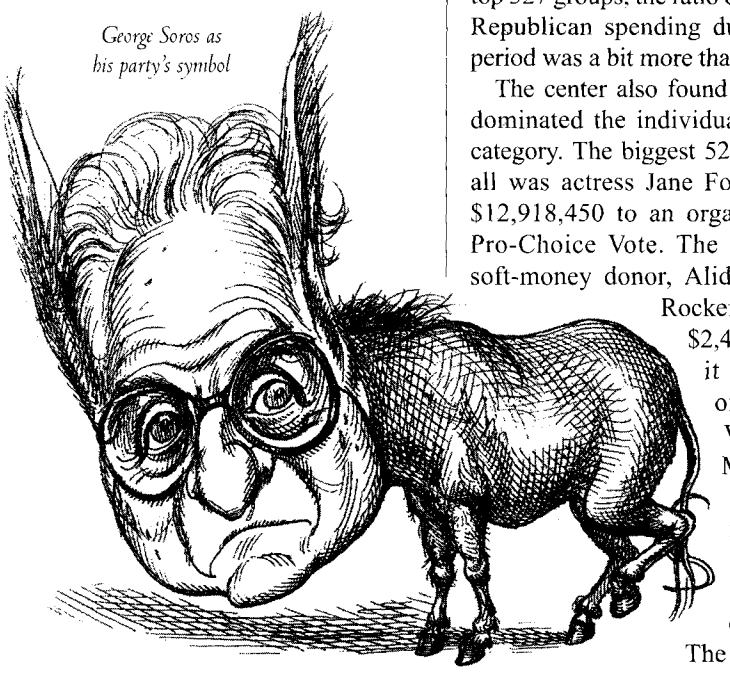
Soros, a naturalized U.S. citizen born in Hungary, said President Bush had "abused" the September 11 terrorist attacks as a pretext to expand his own power and to run roughshod over other nations. Soros has included these concerns in a book, *The Bubble of American Supremacy*, due out next January, which will attack the so-called arrogance of the president's policies.

But Soros plans to do much more than write. Recently, he pledged $10 million to a new Democratic group devoted to defeating Bush in 2004. Soros's gift will be the largest single political donation from an individual in history, surpassing the $7 million check that film producer Haim Saban gave the Democratic party in 2002. "I've come to the conclusion that one can do a lot more about the issues I care about by changing the government than by pushing the issues," Soros told *Fortune* magazine recently.

It's not clear whether Soros can, in fact, change the government, but his $10 million pledge has instantly made him one of the most important men in the Democratic party. His money is going to a new group called America Coming Together (ACT), one of several organizations that have sprung up in the aftermath of the McCain-Feingold campaign-finance law. The law made it illegal for contributors like Soros to give $10 million to the Democratic party, so the founders of America Coming Together created what is, in effect, a substitute party, which can still legally accept such large contributions. Such groups are often referred to as 527's, after the section of the tax code that allows them to operate.

ACT was put together by the main interest groups that make up the Democratic constituency. It was founded by Ellen Malcolm, who is the president of Emily's List; Steve Rosenthal, the former political director of the AFL-CIO; Andrew Stern, head of the Service Employees International Union; Carl Pope, executive director of the Sierra Club; and Cecile Richards, head of America Votes, a group similar to ACT that is made up of representatives of environmental, civil-rights, pro-abortion, and labor groups. Together, they represent pretty much everyone in the Democratic party.

Funded by Soros and others, ACT will assume some of the tasks that the party performed before reform. While it will not run ad campaigns or other media efforts, ACT will concentrate its resources on intensive get-out-the-vote efforts, now often referred to as "voter contact." When ACT announced its formation in August, its officials said it would focus on 17 states: Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, Iowa, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Washington, West Virginia, and Wisconsin. Each state was tightly contested in the 2000 election and promises to be close again next year.



George Soros as his party's symbol

ROMAN GENN

One other thing is notable about Americans Coming Together: There is no organization comparable to it on the right. A recent study by the non-partisan Center for Public Integrity found that so-called 527 groups actually got started before campaign-finance reform and played a significant role in the 2002 elections, the last before McCain-Feingold took effect. The center found that, in the 2002 cycle, Democratic-affiliated 527's spent $185 million in soft money—more than twice the $82 million spent by Republican-affiliated groups.

The center found that all of the top five soft-money spenders during its study period, which began in August 2000 and ended this summer, were affiliated with the Democratic party. First was the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees, which spent $37,990,064. Others included Emily's List and the Sierra Club. In fact, nine of the top ten organizations are Democratic, the only exception being the Bush-Cheney 2000 committee, which spent $13,820,764 during that election. For the top 527 groups, the ratio of Democratic to Republican spending during the study period was a bit more than 12 to 1.

The center also found that Democrats dominated the individual-contributions category. The biggest 527 contributor of all was actress Jane Fonda, who gave $12,918,450 to an organization called Pro-Choice Vote. The second-biggest soft-money donor, Alida Messinger, a Rockefeller heir, gave $2,413,000, most of it to the League of Conservation Voters. Beyond Messinger, nine of the top ten individual soft-money donors gave to Democratic causes. The only exception

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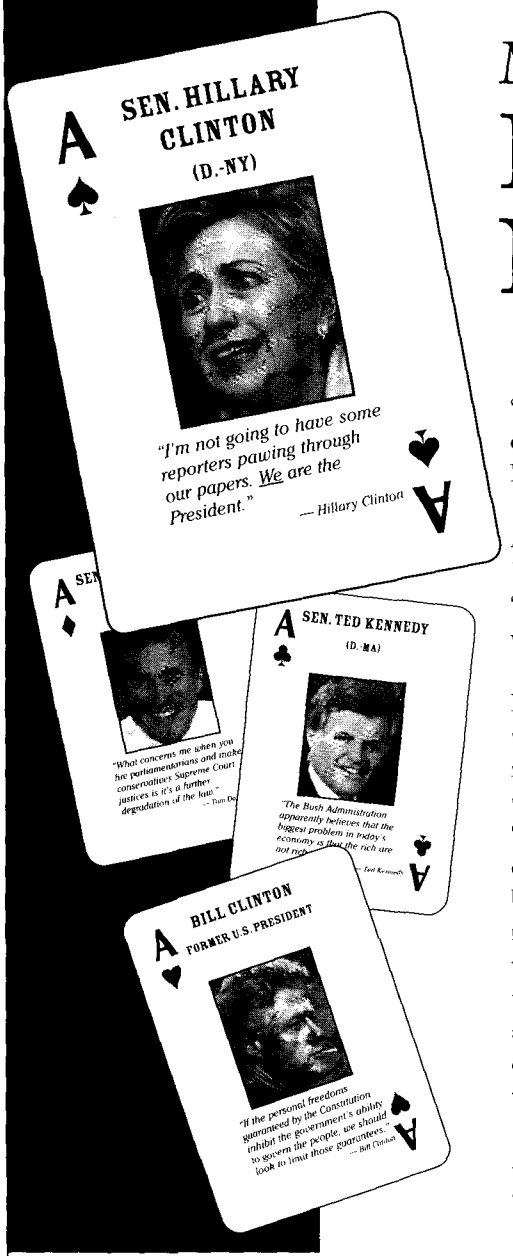
A
SEN. HILLARY CLINTON
(D.-NY)
"I'm not going to have some reporters pawing through our papers. We are the President."
— Hillary Clinton
A
SEN. TED KENNEDY
(D.-MA)
"The Bush Administration apparently believes that the biggest problem in today's economy is that the rich are
A
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was retired pharmaceutical executive Daniel Searle, who gave $1,050,000 to the conservative Club for Growth (he placed ninth on the list). For the top ten individual donors, the ratio of Democratic to Republican contributions during the study period was 25 to 1.

And that was before George Soros and America Coming Together appeared on the scene. Their presence, and that of other Democrat-supporting groups, promises to make the Democrat–Republican disparity even more pronounced in 2004.

One might expect that such a massive Democratic soft-money campaign would ring alarm bells among Republicans, but it appears to have raised few concerns outside the circle of GOP insiders who work on such issues every day. In fact, a sort of false confidence appears to have taken hold in some parts of the GOP because of the success both the party and President Bush have had in raising hard money—the contributions from individuals, limited to $2,000, that are allowed under McCain-Feingold.

According to FEC records, the three big Republican-party committees—the Republican National Committee, the National Republican Congressional Committee, and the National Republican Senatorial Committee—have collected a total of $133,861,490 in limited, hard-money contributions so far in the 2004 election cycle. In comparison, the three analogous Democratic committees have collected a total of $45,662,730.

In the presidential race, Bush raised $49,187,571 in the third quarter of this year, all of it in limited, hard-money contributions, compared with Democratic challenger Howard Dean's $14,800,282, John Kerry's $3,927,059, and Richard Gephardt's $3,724,842.

When those numbers alone are considered, Republicans appear to be winning the money race. But reports of the GOP's substantial lead in hard-money contributions have largely ignored the Democrats' growing lead in soft-money donations to 527 groups. In addition to America Coming Together, the group America Votes promises to raise even more soft money for Democratic causes, and dozens of other groups will also raise significant amounts, including a so-far-unnamed organization being put together by former Clinton operative Harold Ickes.

It should be said that Republican-affiliated groups accept soft money, too. It's just that they are doing far less of it. In the new world of super contributions designed to skirt the requirements of McCain-Feingold, Democrats are the clear winners.

Of course, it was mostly Democrats who said they wanted to remove the allegedly corrupting influence of big contributions in politics. Now, however, the passage of McCain-Feingold has created an irony: By and large, Republicans are working within the spirit of a law they opposed—that is, relying on limited hard-money contributions from individuals—while Democrats are violating the spirit of a law they supported—that is, relying on the kind of unlimited soft-money contributions they roundly condemned during the reform debate.

In the new world of super contributions designed to skirt the requirements of McCain-Feingold, Democrats are the clear winners.

Back in March 2002, as the Senate prepared to pass McCain-Feingold, Kentucky Republican senator Mitch McConnell, the bill's most energetic opponent, rose to make a final summing-up. "Today is a sad day for our Constitution, for our democracy, and for our political parties," McConnell said. "We are all now complicit in a dramatic transfer of power from challenger-friendly, citizen-action groups known as political parties to outside special-interest groups [and] wealthy individuals."

What McConnell predicted has come to pass with the emergence of groups like America Coming Together. In the post-McCain-Feingold, Democratic-dominated world of 527's, the small donor has become less important, and mega-donors like George Soros have become even more important—precisely the opposite of what reformers said they wanted.

Remember the Democrats who spoke so eloquently about the need to eliminate donations—like Soros's $10 million—from the political system? Never mind. **NR**

■ **CULTURE WATCH**

The Horror, the Horror

Halloween has grown into a big deal—too big

MEGHAN COX GURDON

One morning about this time last year I stopped at a coffee shop. The line moved peacefully along, until it was my turn to order. "What'll it be?" said the fellow behind the counter, still looking down at his cash register. "A chocolate croissant and a cup of—Aah!" I yelled. The man had raised his head and was looking at me with yellow goat-eyes. ". . . a cup of coffee, with milk," I finished, shakily. He was, of course, wearing special-effect contact lenses. But I had forgotten that it was almost Halloween, and, as far as my atavistic self was concerned, I had just gazed into the eyes of a monster. For a split second, it was terrifying.

Forget soaring rates of obesity, bankruptcy, and out-of-wedlock births: By far the scariest statistic about contemporary American life is that people now spend more on Halloween than on any other "holiday," apart from Christmas. We spend with abandon even when in the slough of national despond: In October 2001, with Ground Zero still smoldering and the country questioning whether it would ever laugh again, Americans still bought over $6.9 billion on tubes of fake blood, plastic pumpkins, and ghoul costumes. Heaven knows what the wallet-letting will be this year.

"Mummy, look! A circle of ghosts!"

The children are straining against their seatbelts in excitement as we drive past the most egregious manifestation of Halloween's new prominence: home decorating. Until the last five years or so—and I

Mrs. Gurdon's column, "The Fever Swamp," appears Fridays on National Review Online.

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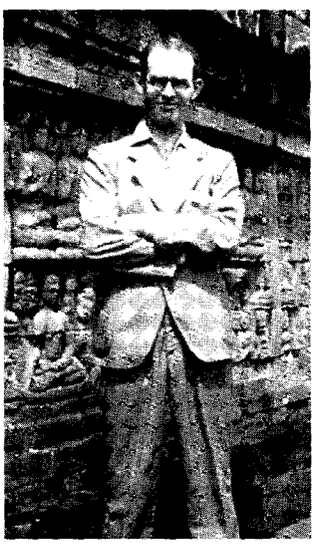
Gareth Jones

— "the anti-Duranty"



Gareth at the magnificent site at Borobudur

"What can you expect if you fearlessly expose the systematic, genocidal murder of 10 million people?"
"You can expect to be murdered . . . "

—Martin Sieff, *United Press International*

"Few people realize that between WWI, and WWII, there was a secret WWI.5. Ronald Reagan finished off this fight with the Evil Empire but 10 million Ukrainians gave their lives at the start. And Jones was the World's First Witness."

—Yaroslaw Chelak, Historian

". . . exposed Stalin . . . revealed Hitler . . . unearthed the secret policies of the Japanese. Jones was respected, admired and feared. "

—Dean Powell, *Western Mail*

Dr Mueller and Gareth's car being pulled out of the mud

"Hollywood had to invent 'Indiana Jones,' but Gareth Jones is the real thing . . ."

—Roman Revknov, Ed., *Ukrainian News and Archives*

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can't imagine what happened to change things—most Americans confined their Halloween celebrations to an orgy of candy-giving and -eating. But for whatever reason, the zeal to adorn homes with satanic images seized the national imagination. Lo, people began spiking witch hats and upside-down witch feet into their lawns to make it look as though a cauldron-stirrer had erred in her flight path and crashed straight into the ground.

"Over there! A giant spider web! Wow!"

We drive past a pretty white center-hall colonial festooned with plastic bats. A gruesome hanged man made of stuffed clothing swings from the limb of an oak tree. I speed up and hope the ardent young hearts behind me won't notice.

"Wait, Mummy, they've got a *graveyard* in *their* yard!"

I dread this time of year. It's not that I oppose the wearing of charming costumes by young children. My son Paris's outfit when he was five still ranks among the world's dearest. He wore a dark-green turtleneck (which he already had), dark-green trousers (ditto), and on to these we stapled cardboard lightning bolts covered with aluminum foil. He was the only electric eel in a class full of store-bought Pokémons. Nor do I question the rightness of shoving barrels of salt-water taffy down young throats. Goodness knows, I like a sugary tidbit on occasion, and my children can imagine nothing nicer than a sack of individually wrapped Snickers bars to eat all on their own.

What gets my sacrificial goat is that Halloween isn't *about* anything. It's not about death, or life, or fall, or The Fall, or family, or patriotic love of country. It is a completely content-free, dark-caped, sugar-frosted bacchanal in a society that already, every day, gives people license to be content-free, sugar-frosted, and to dress however gothically they like—and that includes children.

The fact that I lost this battle when the children entered nursery school may explain my acidity. But when *I* was a girl, Halloween didn't involve obligatory full-school parades, pre-trick-or-treat parties for parents in fancy dress, or coffee jockeys with caprine contact lenses.

Halloween was a low-grade thrill experienced chiefly by the very young. We made costumes with the contents of our dress-up trunks, assembled our school-distributed UNICEF boxes, and marched out into the dusk to petition the neighbors for coins and sweets. Rumors abounded of men who slipped razors into apples, so we avoided mansard-roofed houses. We'd come home, sort the candy by category—hard, chewy, and crunchy—try to trade away those wax-paper-wrapped maple-nut toffees, and go to bed.

Now Halloween is epic-length, parents pay a fortune on mass-produced costumes, and the celebrants who spend most, oddly, fall in marketers' coveted 25–34 age range (the age more of partying than parenting). Through cunning marketing on the part of stuff-producers, and a dismaying weakness in the American character for stuff-

JOSEPH SOHM, CHROMOSOHM INC./CORBIS

buying, Halloween now "represents the beginning of a new season, not just one holiday," according to Tracy Mullin, president of the National Retail Federation. Spider rings! Frankenstein windsocks! Decorative skull lawnbags with twist ties! Every year there's more, and every year it arrives on the shelves a little earlier.

A scene from not so long ago: I am pushing a shopping cart filled with my children through a Connecticut supermarket. It is lovely outside, hot and sunny. We are wearing bathing suits under our clothes.

"Look, Mummy, candy!" Paris, six, crows, pointing to a monstrous heap of chocolates wrapped in black and orange foil.

"Halloween candy?!" I exclaim, not quite taking in what I am seeing.

"Candy!" cries Violet, who's three.

"Andy!" echoes Phoebe, who's two.

"Can you *believe* it, Mummy?" Molly says scornfully, gesturing at a stack of orange spheres further down the aisle. "Jack-o'-lanterns in *August*!"

When a nine-year-old can see through the phoniness of pushing late-October goods in the heat of summer, it must be phony indeed. We rattle disdainfully past the mounds of cheap Halloween candy, all of which, I am sure, has been gathering dust on warehouse pallets for the last ten months.

I blame the Irish. The heathen Celts celebrated Samhain, Lord of Darkness, in late autumn. That festival was co-opted by Christianity and became All Hallow's Eve, the night before All Saint's Day, which it remains. Irish immigrants introduced trick-or-treating to America—it derives from an old peasant practice—and Ireland brought us the tale of Jack-o'-the-Lantern, a shiftless Paddy condemned eternally to walk the earth with only a hollowed-out turnip to light his way (it became a pumpkin after large numbers of Jack's people landed at Ellis Island). October 31 was for hundreds of years a time to remember the loved and sainted dead, but has long since degenerated into the confused revelry we know today.

At school, I whip 'round the mothers to ask why they celebrate Halloween. "It's a Hallmark-created holiday," laughs Allison, who likes the tradition but limits her boys' costumes to the non-funereal. "But c'mon, it's fun for the kids."

"I don't like the dark, witchy undercurrents of Halloween," says Melissa, "but when else do you see high-and-mighty people in clown wigs?"

"I don't know what it means. We don't do it in Brazil," says Kareen, who doesn't do it here, either.

Apart from Wiccans, who have their own lavender-tinged, Celt-promoting agenda, it's hard to find anyone who knows why Americans now celebrate Halloween with such vigor. Yet you see middle-class women rummaging furiously through piles of made-in-China lion suits at $12.99 apiece to find the right size for their 18-month-olds. Step into a fabric store, and you will see mothers taking down bolts of cloth suitable for their little Grim Reapers, Gypsies, and Draculas. When they zip those costumes over their children and march out into the night, what do they think they're doing?

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Don't get me wrong. Americans should be free to buy what they want, even inflatable skeletons and glow-in-the-dark vampire teeth. I also think that adults should have more fancy-dress parties, not fewer, especially elegant ones.

But there are two utterly creepy things about Halloween, quite apart from its glamorization of demons and axe-murderers. The first is that it's a trumped-up festival of nothingness—as if our attention spans were so short that we needed a strange, cheap thrill between Labor Day and Thanksgiving. The second is that for nearly a month every year, Halloween infantilizes the entire country. Giggly pleasure in dress-ups and sweets is fetching in children. But when it overwhelms a great portion of the autumn, and otherwise grown-up people enter into the supposed "spirit" without having any idea *why* they do so, then it becomes a piece of sustained and irritating whimsy.

That's Halloween for you in a pumpkin-shell: sweet enough for children, but when adults join in, it's just plain childish. **NR**

■ **SPORTS**

Against Baseball Socialism

Haves, have-nots, and Commissioner Selig's faulty vision

TIM MARCHMAN

THE nation (or most of it) may have been rooting for a Cubs–Red Sox World Series, but, as the Series opened, baseball commissioner Allan H. "Bud" Selig was the happiest man in America. He couldn't have chosen a better match than that between the Florida Marlins and the New York Yankees. No matter which team won, he and his vision of the game would prosper. A victory by the not-rich Marlins would prove that last year's collective-bargaining agreement (CBA) between owners and players was a great success; a victory by the rich Yankees would prove it wasn't quite enough of one. Either way, he'd get to argue that the CBA should be extended when it expires in 2006. How can opposite outcomes both serve Selig's interests? If you aren't sure, you haven't been paying attention to the game outside the lines.

This was a good year for baseball. Usually downtrodden Montreal and Kansas City played meaningful games well into September, while the equally hapless Philadelphia and Florida clubs went to the last week of the season in their fight for a playoff spot. Meanwhile,

Mr. Marchman, baseball columnist for the *New York Sun*, is writing a book on baseball in the 1990s. He lives in Chicago.

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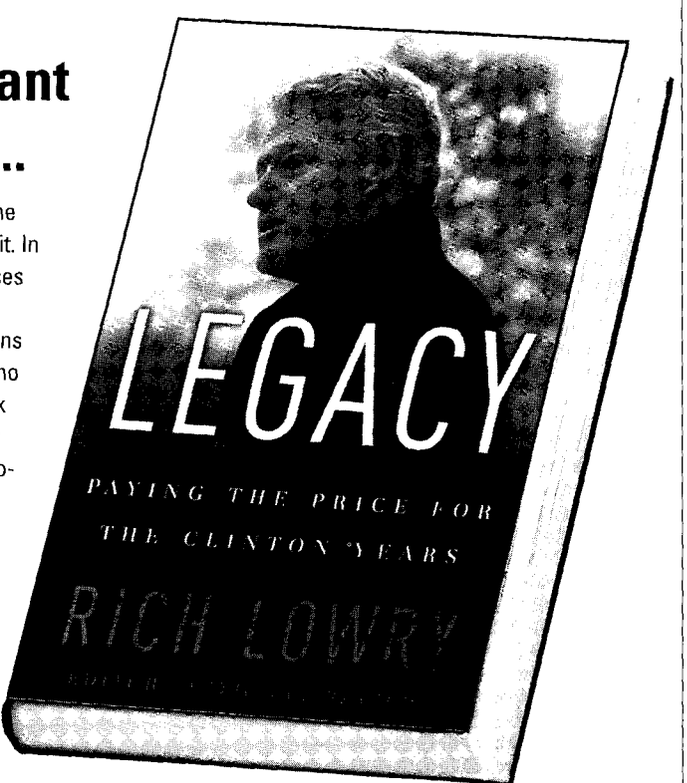

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fans from Oakland and from Minnesota's twin cities cheered as their teams continued strong runs of regular-season success and won their divisions.

What do these teams have in common? Absolutely nothing—except that they are all, as "small market" teams, recipients of welfare checks from Major League Baseball's inane revenue-sharing plan, implemented in 1996 and significantly strengthened by last year's CBA. Of course, being designated a "small market" club for the purpose of revenue sharing has little to do with the actual size of a team's market. According to sports economist Andrew Zimbalist, the Phillies and the Miami-based Marlins will receive a combined total of about $36 million in revenue-sharing money this year. This despite being situated in, respectively, the fifth- and sixth-largest American metropolitan areas with major-league teams. Absurdly, last year's world-champion Angels, who play in the Los Angeles suburbs, will, according to the same estimate, receive $13 million this year. Even more absurdly, the Seattle Mariners, who play in the 15th-largest market, will actually have to contribute $28 million to the revenue-sharing pool, and the Cleveland Indians, who play in the 22nd-largest market, will pay out $19 million.

Last year, when the CBA was ratified, Commissioner Selig could hardly contain his elation about the league's first victory over the players' union in nearly 40 years. "This historic agreement will significantly contribute to restoring competitive balance and economic stability," he crowed. "[It] revives hope and faith to many franchises in baseball." Has it, though? And what, exactly, is meant by "competitive balance"?

The second question is easier to answer. Competitive balance is a nice euphemism for what Henry D. Fetter, in his excellent new book *Taking On the Yankees*, calls "cooperative mediocrity." The revenue-sharing plan doesn't attempt to compensate teams that play in small cities for the disadvantages they face, which would make sense. It instead penalizes high-revenue teams and rewards low-revenue teams.

To put it another way, it rewards incompetence and punishes competence. Seattle, playing in a metropolitan area of about 2.5 million, has high revenues because of its fantastic stadium and its consistently excellent team, and because of aggressive marketing in Japan, where its games are broadcast nationally. Detroit, playing in a metropolitan area of 4.4 million, has . . . well, this year Detroit ran one of the worst teams in the history of baseball—yet it will get around $9 million from the revenue-sharing pot.

The revenue-sharing plan penalizes high-revenue teams and rewards low-revenue teams. To put it another way, it rewards incompetence and punishes competence.

The lesson for baseball clubs? Run a bad team that doesn't attract fans, and you'll get free money; invest in your team and open up new revenue streams, and you'll be labeled "large market" and forced to cough up your hard-earned cash. How this, or the "competitive balance tax" that no one except the New York Yankees pays, revives the "hope and faith" of anyone but incompetent owners is quite open to question. The "small market" teams that performed well this year did so for reasons that have nothing to do with their welfare checks. The Marlins had some unexpectedly good pitching, got a breakout season from warhorse third baseman Mike Lowell, and were able to sign veteran catcher Ivan Rodriguez after freeing up some cash by sending expensive players to Colorado and Atlanta. Oakland is successful every year because it, along with a few other teams, applies real-world business concepts like cost-benefit analysis to its club instead of running it like a feudal barony.

As these examples show, it isn't at all obvious that revenue sharing is necessary to team success. Indeed, one suspects the whole point of the recent CBA—which includes a "luxury tax" on teams whose payrolls exceed $117 million—is to limit the amount of money clubs have to spend on player salaries, thus depressing the wage market and ensuring greater profits for owners.

Ironically, while Commissioner Selig's crude interventions in the market were bringing consequences silly at best and damaging at worst, that same market was busy correcting itself. As Oakland, Toronto, and a few other clubs have realized, some peculiar facts apply to players as commodities.

For one thing, the performance of players peaks much sooner than is generally thought, usually between the ages of 26 and 28; this means that, by manipulating players' service time, a club can get the best years out of them before they ever become eligible for free agency, and then let someone else pay big money for their declining years.

Second, player-development paths are much more predictable than has been generally thought; by using sophisticated statistical analysis, a club can determine which young players are most likely to develop into stars.

Third, teams have finally realized that they don't have to submit to salary arbitration. If a flawed player who has not yet signed a guaranteed multi-year contract is due to be awarded $5 million in salary arbitration that the team doesn't think he's worth, it can just refuse to tender him a contract, making him a free agent. Driven by nothing but market forces, the salary structure of baseball is collapsing.

For these reasons, the ability of poor teams to compete is not really the problem. What's worrying is Commissioner Selig's continuing quest for "economic certainty." If teams like the Marlins, the A's, and the Twins continue to succeed, he will take credit for it and, when the CBA expires, argue for more revenue sharing and a lower threshold for the competitive-balance tax. If they don't succeed, he'll push for the same, arguing that still more baseball socialism is needed. Either way, the players aren't likely to be happy about renewing an agreement that has the effect of reducing their salaries. The optimistic must content themselves with enjoying the "hope and faith" that Selig has brought them, while the pessimists reflect that few seasons remain before a labor showdown makes 1994's strike look like a picket at the local five-and-dime. **NR**

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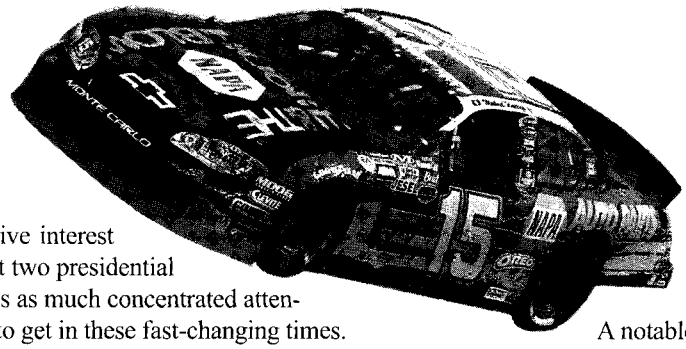
■ COVER STORY

NASCAR NATION

One journalist's journey of discovery

JOHN DERBYSHIRE



Forget about the Soccer Mom, object of obsessive interest to political strategists in the last two presidential elections. Two election cycles is as much concentrated attention as a voter bloc can expect to get in these fast-changing times. The candidates of 2004 have fixed their sights on a new quarry: the NASCAR Dad. So, at any rate, we are told by Democratic pollster Celinda Lake, who coined the term. A NASCAR Dad is a rural or small-town voter, most likely white and living in the South. Once upon a time he was a reliable Democrat, but he has been voting steadily Republican in recent elections for "cultural" reasons—reasons having to do with guns, religion, patriotism, and lifestyle. What, exactly, is his connection with NASCAR—the National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing? In the hope of finding out, I recently attended a major NASCAR event at the Talladega track in Alabama. Before I report on what I found, here is some background on the sport NASCAR represents.

The term "stock car" refers to a street automobile from a dealer's stock, the kind you and I drive, as opposed to the custom-built pod-and-strut mutants you see in Formula One racing. When ordinary citizens began to purchase automobiles in large numbers in the 1930s and 1940s, some of them were taken with the urge to race against other drivers on unpaved local dirt tracks. Spectators assembled to watch. Drivers tinkered with their engines to give them more speed. This was happening all over the country by the late 1940s, when NASCAR was founded, but it was happening much more in the South than elsewhere. Wherever it happened, though, it was from the beginning mainly a working-class interest, taken up by young men who liked fiddling with automobiles and exhibiting physical courage among their peers.

A notable early attempt to bring stock-car racing to wider attention was Tom Wolfe's long article "The Last American Hero" in the March 1965 issue of *Esquire*. Wolfe's subject was Junior Johnson, who raced from 1953 to 1966, and was thereafter involved in the sport as an owner until 1995. One of stock-car racing's early superstars, Johnson had perfected his skills by working as a driver for his father's moonshine business in the Appalachian foothills, racing along remote country roads by night to outwit the "revenuers"—agents of the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms. Johnson Senior was one of the biggest operators of illegal whiskey stills in the South.

Tom Wolfe had no difficulty getting some color out of Junior Johnson and his neighbors in Wilkes County, N.C. While insisting that "very few grits, Iron Boy overalls, clodhoppers or hats with ventilation holes up near the crown enter into this story," Wolfe nonetheless managed to leave his readers with the impression that stock-car racing was a sport favored pretty exclusively by white Southern rustics—the kind of people who keep coon dogs and, in common with the late Hank Williams, believe that "hill" rhymes with "real." Junior Johnson's own take on the episode was of course from the other side of the cultural divide: "That Wolfe guy was something else. He showed up down here in Wilkes County talkin' funny with a New York accent [Wolfe is from Virginia], and wearin' fancy clothes."

WORTH CANDY/ICON SMI

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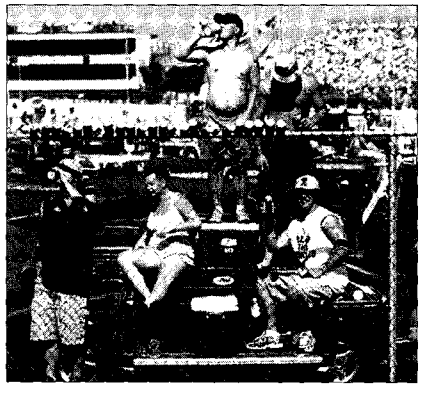
Officials of NASCAR nowadays wince at this Southern-rustic image. Stock-car racing is, they insist, a sport for everyone, an *inclusive* sport, a *family* sport. For 30 years they have been trying to shake off those connotations of liquor-running good ol' boys and big-haired women. They have had some success in spreading interest around the country, but they have not yet persuaded America's cognitive elites to take stock-car racing seriously. This was apparent in February 2001, when NASCAR superstar Dale Earnhardt was killed in a crash at the Daytona 500. Earnhardt was mourned extravagantly by millions of racing fans. Meanwhile, from executive suites and faculty common rooms, from the wood-paneled corridors of prestigious law firms, from the bustling, "diversity"-obsessed editorial offices of broadsheet newspapers and network-TV newsrooms, rose the plaintive cry: "Dale *who*?"

Yet if you look at the numbers, this is not a minor sport. NASCAR's Winston Cup, the biggest of the three "major league" series in the stock-car-racing calendar, drew 6.7 million ticketed spectators for 36 events last year, an average of 186,000 per event. By way of comparison, paid attendance for the NFL in 2002 averaged 66,000 per event, for major league baseball 28,000, for NBA basketball 17,000. TV viewership for a NASCAR race runs around 15 to 20 million, the same as for many major-league baseball playoff games.



What is it that all these people are watching? What's the appeal? There must be some deep desire in the human psyche to watch human beings race vehicles round a circuit. Chariot races were, after all, an obsession of both the Romans and the Byzantines. I went to Alabama seeking enlightenment.

FAR FROM DISNEY

Your first impression of Talladega speedway is of sheer size. The track is an approximate oval, with grandstands at both the long sides. Seen from one grandstand, the opposite one seems to shimmer in the misty distance. It is in fact only three-fifths of a mile away, but appears farther because of the haze generated by huge quantities of traffic all around, and by barbecue grills on the infield. Oh, the infield—I had better explain about the Talladega infield.

The infield—212 acres at Talladega—is the interior of the oval. You get to it by driving through one of three tunnels under the track. Much of the infield is taken up with maintenance areas, garages, administrative buildings, and access roads, but the remainder—around 120 acres—is available to fans. And here they are, the hard core of stock-car-racing fandom. And here are their vehicles: Your *second* impression of the speedway is that you have never in your life seen so many RVs (that is, recreational vehicles, campers) all in one place. The infield fan areas are filled with folk who arrive typically a day or two before the big race and just camp out there in the infield. Some of the RVs are improvised. One popular model consists of an old school bus painted some improbable color, with metal railings welded around the roof so the occupants can stand up there to watch the race.

NASCAR's attempts to Disneyfy their sport have made little headway in the Talladega infield. The crowd is noisy and beery. They wear denim shorts and T-shirts, baseball caps or bandannas. I see a lot of tattoos and a lot of Confederate flags. The track's security people inspect the interior of each vehicle before allowing it to park, and I was told it has been "some years" since there was a shooting on the infield, but things still get rowdy, particularly the night before a big race. (Among the track's other administrative facilities is a small jail.) Rowdy, and raunchy too: The Mardi Gras custom of beads for skin (you give the lady a string of beads, she briefly exposes her chest) has come up to Talladega, and it is common to see girls with several strings of beads round their necks—although, as one of my NASCAR minders noted wistfully, "The girls you'd *like* to see doing it aren't the ones doing it."

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I watched the first few minutes of the race from the infield, near the starting line. The 43 competing vehicles circle the track slowly, two by two, behind a pace car. Each car's position in line has been determined by pre-race qualifying laps. As they come to the starting line, the pace car pulls off the track, a green flag is waved, and the drivers throttle up to full power. Everyone had told me that this is the most thrilling moment of a race, and they did not lie. That mighty surge of engines, the even mightier roar of the crowd, the smell of gasoline and rubber, all combine into an extraordinary sensory experience. What follows is necessarily something of an anticlimax, especially as it goes on for three hours or more. The lead cars tend to form a large "pack," so you get a small reprise of that starting thrill each time the pack passes your viewing point, but after half an hour or so, as the faster cars lapped the slower ones, I lost track of who was leading.

I wandered down to the pit area. Cars need to be refueled at several points in a 500-mile race, and wheels need to be changed. A driver loses position when he makes a pit stop, of course, and part of the strategy of racing—there is a great deal of strategy in this sport—is judging the best time to make your stops. The pit work

FANS AT DOVER INTERNATIONAL SPEEDWAY

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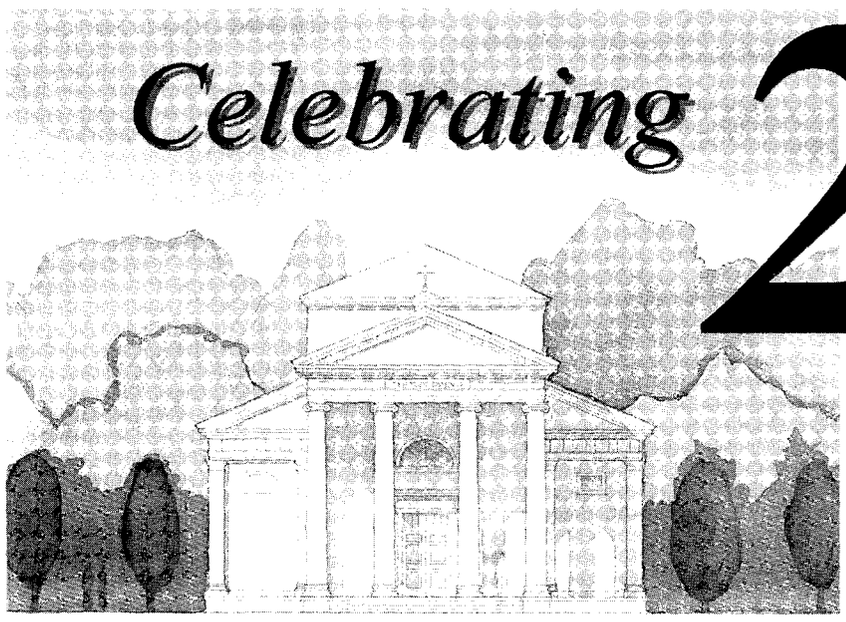
is done with terrific dispatch, by teams who practice endlessly at shaving tenths of a second off their turnaround time. The team I watched—it was driver Bill Elliott's—changed four wheels and refueled the car all in less than 15 seconds. They have a trick of pre-fixing the lugs in place on the replacement wheels with an elastic cement. Then, when the old wheel is off, on goes the new one, bang!, and the power wrench secures the lugs, DZ!-DZ!-DZ!-DZ!-DZ!-DZ! "Slicker 'n snot on a doorknob," pronounced the team leader with satisfaction as Elliott vroomed away.

Up close the cars look surprisingly small and flimsy. Their "stock" nature is, at this point in the evolution of the sport, highly theoretical. Eligible models in the Winston Cup series are the Chevy Monte Carlo, Pontiac Grand Prix, Ford Taurus, and Dodge Intrepid, but none of the cars I saw bore much resemblance to the street models of those marques. None of their side bodywork panels paused to include a door, for instance; the driver climbs in and out through his side window (which has no glass). An owner I spoke with, who had a Monte Carlo entered in the race, described to me in loving detail how his mechanics hand-tool all the car parts in his 75,000-square-foot machine shop. I interrupted him to ask: "You hand-make everything? So where, exactly, does Chevrolet come in?" He looked a little flustered. "Oh, you know, they supply some parts . . . the chassis design . . ."

It is commonly said that car-racing fans go to the track in the hope of seeing a grisly crash. From my own encounters with

fans on the infield and in the stands, I don't believe this. Aside from the sensory thrills of speed and noise, and the rude social pleasures of the infield, the main appeal of the sport, for most fans, lies in rooting for their favorite drivers. Each one has some points of character, personal history, or driving style that endear him to, or repel, some section of the fan base. A few are wildly popular with practically everyone: Dale Earnhardt Sr. was, and his son, Dale Jr., now is. ("On account of his daddy," a lady fan in the stands said fondly when I asked why.) A few are widely disliked. Kurt Busch, a fast-rising young star known for . . . *unorthodox* driving tactics, is a villain to traditionalists, and to the kind of Southerner who believes in maintaining the exquisite manners of the region even when you are trying to kill someone. When the drivers were individually announced during the pre-race proceedings at Talladega, his name was greeted with a great outbreak of booing from the fans.

WORTH CANDY/ICON SMI



In the past, a liberal arts education was assumed to be only for an elite: the others were to settle for vocational training or a mediocre education. Such a view neglected one truth revealed by Christ: that equality is part of the good.

- Catalog of the Thomas More College of Liberal Arts, page 38

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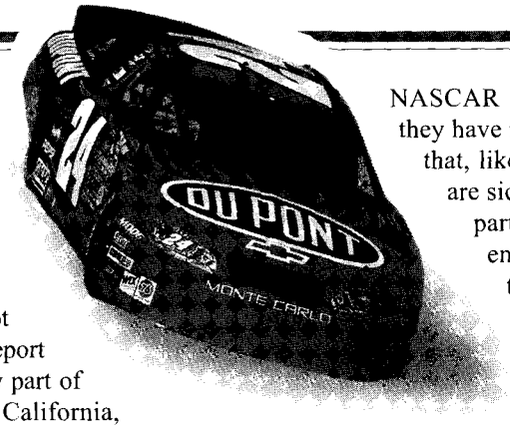

SOME DEMOGRAPHICS

What then of those stereotypes the NASCAR suits so strenuously try to distance themselves from? The Southern bias, for example? Since Talladega, smack plumb in the heart of the Heart of Dixie, is the only track I have ever been to, my personal experience of the sport has not been well balanced, and I shall dutifully report that you can attend a stock-car race in any part of the country. There are major tracks in California, Kansas, and New Hampshire. The mathematician in me wants to check the numbers, though, and the numbers suggest the following broad truth: Half of this sport belongs to the South, while the other half is spread out among all the rest of us.

Take the location of tracks, for example. Defining the South to be the old Confederacy plus Kentucky, of the 21 major tracks (not counting road courses) in the U.S., 11 are in the South. These Southern tracks have 15.4 of the available 32 miles of roadway and 1.31 million of the total 2.46 million grandstand seats. Over a half, nearly a half, and over a half. It is the same with the 43 drivers at Talladega: I tallied 21 drivers from the South; the next biggest regional group was from the Midwest, with 11 drivers.

NASCAR fans are overwhelmingly white, but they have nothing against black people. It is only that, like much of the rest of the country, they are sick of the racial-guilt industry, and most particularly of Jesse Jackson and his self-enriching shakedown schemes. And although NASCAR has cut the tie with Jackson, it maintains a busy program of "diversity internships" for minority college students.

The reason for the paucity of black drivers and owners—there are a handful—is captured by Adam Bellow in his book *In Praise of Nepotism*: "In auto racing, an equipment-intensive sport with a high financial barrier to entry, it pays to have family connections." In fact, the NASCAR personnel database reads like the First Book of Chronicles, with drivers begetting drivers and owners in apparently endless succession.

The social appeal of stock-car racing is wider than it used to be, and getting still wider, with college logos now featuring among the ads that festoon race-car bodywork. A sport built around such a strong network of family connections is, however, going to grow away from its roots only very gradually. This remains a *conservative* sport. That does not mean, of course, that its fan base can be guaranteed to vote for conservatives. The folk I mingled with at Talladega the other day were still largely working- and lower-middle-class. If they were to lose their jobs in a major recession, they would not stop to ask whether the president in charge at the time called himself a conservative or a liberal. Likewise, while they will cheer on their commander in chief if he pursues a determined war against our nation's enemies, they will not long tolerate U.S. fatalities in a drawn-out politicized conflict where vigorous action is restrained by deference to the opinions of foreigner hecklers or self-anointed domestic elites.

Whoever comes into stock-car racing will find a sport in which physical courage is admired, family bonds are treasured, and the nation's flag is honored.

Every one of these 43 drivers, by the way, was a white male. None had a Hispanic surname, though Christian Fittipaldi is from São Paulo, Brazil. The median age of the drivers was over 39—older than I would have expected. Every one older than 34 was married, with a median 3.5 children.

The Southernness, whiteness, maleness, and (though I am going out on a limb here) heterosexuality of the sport offer obvious openings to PC inquisitors. Last June, for example, a board member of Jesse Jackson's Rainbow/PUSH operation told reporters that stock-car racing is "the last bastion of white supremacy." This was a counterstrike in a campaign by Jackson's critics to get NASCAR to stop contributing to Rainbow/PUSH, on the grounds that the funds end up mostly in the pockets of Jackson, his relatives, and his mistresses. The campaign was eventually successful and NASCAR stopped their contributions. In the conversations I had at Talladega, fan approval was unanimous.

There was nothing racist about that approval, though. Among the celebrities introduced onstage during the pre-game show at Talladega were the current Miss America and football great Reggie White, both black. They were cheered as loudly as anyone—Reggie White especially so, for having taken a strong anti-Jackson line in the summer's controversy. It is true that

I am going to leave it to professional analysts to decide whether NASCAR Dads will be decisive in the 2004 elections, and just register the following impression that I brought away from Talladega with me: Whoever comes into stock-car racing, whether as driver, or owner, or fan, or political pollster, or just inquisitive outsider, will find a sport in which physical courage is admired, family bonds are treasured, the nation's flag is honored, and the proper point of balance between courteous restraint and necessary aggression is constantly debated. I greatly enjoyed my day at the races. If NASCAR fans really do form a voting bloc, I would much rather they were on my side than on the other. I am glad to have made the acquaintance of a thrilling, noisy, colorful, commercial, very *American* sport. **NR**

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■ THE ADMINISTRATION

Air Rummy

A conversation with the secretary of defense—and the missus

JAY NORDLINGER

Out West

DONALD RUMSFELD'S up and at 'em, raring to go—as usual. Big grin, bounce in his step, shiny as a penny. We're at the Broadmoor Hotel in Colorado Springs, where the secretary has just hosted a conference of NATO defense ministers. The Broadmoor has a significant place in Republican history, and in American history: It's the resort where George W. Bush had his famous 40th-birthday bash, at which point he said, "*No más*—no more drinking," and began the ascent that culminated in the presidency.

But anyway, Rumsfeld is leaving the Broadmoor and flying to the Los Angeles area, where he's giving a speech at the Reagan Library. Our departure from the hotel is rather quiet, not to say ho-hum. Other defense ministers have roared out with sirens blaring, lights flashing—a lot of pomp. But the Rumsfeld motorcade emits no noise, flashes no lights, breaks no traffic laws—just proceeds to the base where the secretary will meet his plane for the two-hour flight to California.

Aboard the plane, Rumsfeld continues chipper. This is supposed to be a "bad week" for him because there's been a controversy in the press concerning authority over Iraq: Rumsfeld is alleged to have lost some to Condoleezza Rice. He waves off the controversy, however, saying that everything's proceeding normally, with a proper division of labor among the National Security Council staff, the State Department, and the Pentagon.

We talk about a range of things, beginning with NATO—as that has been the main business of the week. Do we still need NATO, more than ten years after the collapse of the Soviet Union? Yes, says Rumsfeld, and it has been freshened by new entries from the East. In fact, when Rumsfeld made that notorious remark, last January, about "Old Europe" and "New Europe," he was really thinking of NATO: old, established NATO, and the new, augmented NATO. "The center of gravity had shifted to the east," he says, "and I was being hit with all sorts of questions about, 'Europe's against you,' and I was thinking to myself that the overwhelming majority of the European countries were supporting us—it just happened that the ones that weren't were Germany and France." Rumsfeld likes to point out that the formerly Communist countries have been eager to aid the U.S. in Iraq, having a keen appreciation of freedom, and opportunities for a new beginning.

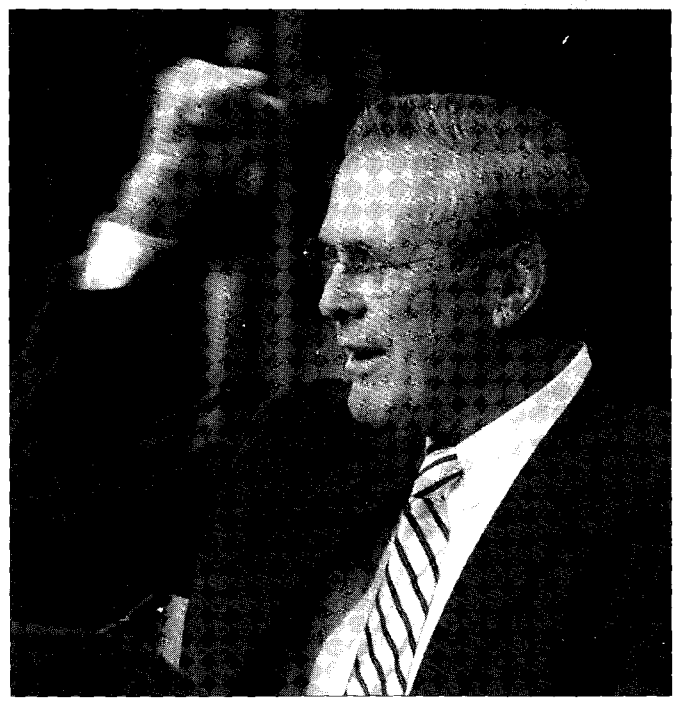
Discussion soon turns to the size of the military. A great many people argue that we need a bigger military: more people, more matériel, more of pretty much everything. How can we attend to our global responsibilities—or the ones we've assumed for ourselves—with (to be blunt) a Clinton-sized military? Mark Helprin made a powerful case for the "more" side in NATIONAL REVIEW ("Phony War," April 22, 2002).

Rumsfeld says, first off, "Mark's a smart fellow"—the understatement of the day. But he goes on to defend the current size of the military, stressing "flexibility" and "deconfliction" (i.e., the need to keep different parts of the military out of one another's way). He cautions against a "mindset that's still back in the 20th century," and claims that "the people who really get it are the ones who just went through" the Afghan and Iraq campaigns. "It's a cliché to say, 'Well, technology may be more sophisticated these days, but that doesn't change the need for boots on the ground,' and we know that." It should be recalled, however, that "the Soviets had 300,000 troops on the ground in Afghanistan, and they lost."

Moreover, he says, we must make sure, in Iraq, that we don't become a permanent presence, around which "everything grows." Foreign forces—including those from the United States—"ought to be there to help stabilize the situation" and then get out. It's encouraging, he says, that "we now have 56,000 Iraqis who are contributing to their own security, and I don't mean just standing around and observing." No, "they're contributing in non-trivial ways—fighting and *dying*." He adds that he'd be "the first one in the world" to recommend more of our own troops in Iraq, if he were told by those in charge over there that we needed them.

Likewise, would he ask for a bigger military, overall, if he thought it were necessary, no matter what the political or budgetary considerations? Hell, yes (in a word—or two). Rumsfeld says that, when he first went to Washington in 1957, the U.S. was spending a much bigger percentage of GDP on defense, and we could easily do so again—if necessary.

At the Reagan Library, October 10, 2003



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I read him a couple of quotes from the *New York Times*, having to do with the Rumsfeld-Rice-reshuffling story: An "administration official" (anonymous) has said, "This is about more than just how we handled Iraq. It's about getting the Rumsfeld crowd to understand the reality of what's happening, and what's not working." And a "senior American diplomat" has said, "Rumsfeld doesn't like this because he doesn't want to admit anything went wrong. So, what else is new? It's Rumsfeld."

Does he have anything to say about that? The SecDef practically leaps out of his chair: "He's talking about *me*! And this isn't about me! It's so far beyond individual personalities. It's about Iraq, and the future of that country, and the future of our own country!" Anything else, he contends, is insignificant, including intra-administration intrigue—the existence of which he downplays anyway.

Speaking of intra-administration politics: I bring up the secretary of state. "Colin Powell has a very good world press," I note. "Excellent," Rumsfeld interjects, gulping down coffee: an *excellent* press—"and in the U.S., too." "Yes, I meant to include that," I continue. "And you, on the other hand, have a rather less good press. Do you have a bit of a good cop/bad cop routine going on, and do you find Secretary Powell's excellent press just the slightest bit irksome?" No, he says, there is no good cop/bad cop, at least not consciously, and certainly not on his part. As for the press, "The only thing I worry about is what's best for the country, and what's best for the administration," and that entails doing your job, in fair press weather or foul.

I further point out that a lot of people believe that Rumsfeld enjoys war, that he's belligerent—that the War on Terror has been a high for him. He ponders for a while, then gives a two-part answer. First, anyone who believes this of him doesn't know him. He and his wife—who is traveling with him, incidentally—have visited many military hospitals, seen men with limbs blown off, without faces. And second, he is, it's true, very competitive—and if there's a fight, he seeks to win it.

We come back to the press. It has plenty to say about Rumsfeld; what does he have to say about *it*? In the main, he thinks that the press is a little lazy and a little gullible—unwilling to check things out, too ready to accept assertions at face value. "Washington has changed so much since I first [arrived]. Today it seems so organized around talking points." On a Sunday-morning talk show, you might hear a fellow saying the same thing "five, ten times in 28 minutes." And "you get the feeling, 'Fair enough: Either he believes what he's saying, or it's a talking point.'" And the talking point may be true: but doesn't the "journalistic community" have a responsibility to go find out?

He cites a few specifics: 1) "Go it alone"—the idea that, in Iraq, the United States was "going it alone." 2) "We need more troops" (in Iraq). 3) "No plan"—the U.S. was unprepared for after-Saddam. And 4) our old friend "imminence"—the Iraqi threat wasn't imminent, and the administration said it was. Rumsfeld knocks down all of these, in emphatic detail. About No. 4, he asks, "When, by the way, was 9/11 'imminent'? An hour before it happened? A week before? A month before? A year before?"

I ask whether Rumsfeld reads Maureen Dowd, the *New York Times* columnist who regularly makes sport of him. He allows that he reads the headline and the first paragraph or two. Then, having gotten the drift, he quits. "Do you know her?" he asks me. "No," I say, "but you've been good for her career." He responds: "I'm not so sure about that—that this has been good for her career." A highly interesting point, which there is too little time to pursue.

PARTNER FOR LIFE

Any subject may be pursued with Joyce Rumsfeld, the secretary's wife of nearly 50 years. This is a famous marriage in political circles, and Mrs. Rumsfeld is an impressive and admired figure in her own right: a reader and a thinker, a doer and an advocate, warm and open. She and the secretary both come from Chicago, as can be heard in their accents (hers even more than his). When did they meet? "In high school, when we were 14." Was he the most popular guy in school? "Yes." Was she the most popular girl? "No!" And what did she like about him? "He was fun, exciting. There was a little mystery there. I sort of followed him around." They were married right after college.

> 'This isn't about me! It's so far beyond individual personalities. It's about Iraq, and the future of that country, and the future of our own country!'

Mrs. Rumsfeld is happy to be back in Washington, after a 25-year hiatus. (Following his stint as defense secretary in the Ford administration, Rumsfeld went into business, although he performed several tasks for the government during those years.) Mrs. Rumsfeld is obviously a patriot and an idealist. Besides, she says, "This is a good age, the age at which Don and I find ourselves"—perspective has been gained, and criticism is unstinging. What's more, she likes this president, George W. Bush: "He's my kind of person. He's straightforward, he knows his own mind, he *believes* things. He doesn't flop around."

And what's it like, if I may, to be married to a man widely considered a . . . sex symbol. "Odd," she says. "Very odd. And Don finds it bewildering. People just love him, just mob him, wherever we go." (A military aide nearby, and overhearing this conversation, chimes in, "Yeah, sometimes I feel like I'm a roadie with Pearl Jam"—a rock group.) Mrs. Rumsfeld talks of being in New York recently, and dropping by Bergdorf's, the department store, with her husband. "A clerk was helping some customers, and she just dropped them when Don came in. She was so flustered. She couldn't speak. Later she actually apologized. She said,

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'I don't know what came over me. Movie stars pass through here all the time, and it doesn't faze me. But when your husband showed up, I thought I was going to pass out.'"

I ask Mrs. Rumsfeld whether her husband has occasioned this sort of excitement throughout his career (he was elected to Congress at 30). No, she says: It's a recent phenomenon. And how would she explain it? "C-SPAN"—that's her best guess. The public can see Rumsfeld for themselves, taking in whole press conferences, if they like, forming their own opinions, not having to rely on snippets or others' reports. This has made an astounding difference.

At this point, the secretary bounds back and says to his wife, "We're comin' up on the Grand Canyon"—and remembers the time when he and Mrs. Rumsfeld had to *walk* out, because he had a bad back and was unable to sit on his horse. Nine hours, it took them. "In what decade was this?" I inquire. "Oh, about eight or nine years ago," he answers. That, and whitewater rafting, and other such activities are the Rumsfelds' idea of fun.

Mrs. Rumsfeld is a bit of a media maven, and I ask whether she reads the *New York Times*. Yes, she says, "but faster than I used to." She likes the *Washington Post*'s editorials, because they're "thoughtful, worthwhile, and not knee-jerk." And does she read Maureen Dowd? "Yes, I do." And . . . ? "Well, she's clearly a bright and talented person," but her mission seems to be ridicule—artful ridicule, with little content or argument. The whole thing is soaked in cynicism. And "there is nothing I like less in a person than cynicism. I hope that [the columnist] is not cynical in the rest of her life. Because, to be cynical 100 percent of the time—that would be sad."

NO CHOICE BUT TO WIN

Donald Rumsfeld, like his wife, is plenty idealistic, but he's also very hard-headed (and so is she, for that matter). I ask him a question of the hour: Can the Middle East undergo a democratic transformation, or should the U.S. confine itself to eliminating terrorists and their state supporters, whenever possible? "Well," he says, "the global war on terror is about us"—our own security, our own defense (for there is no true and tight defense at our border). If we can get "another one or two or three countries to allow their people to be free," that would be "terrific"—it would also contribute handsomely to American security. But the central purpose of the war is self-defense.

And what about "preemption"? Has this overtaken deterrence and containment as the leading U.S. doctrine? Rumsfeld says, essentially, that all of the above are necessary—and that, "in history," we have always had all of the above. "I mean, if a duke saw a neighboring army forming on the border, he probably wouldn't wait around. There are certain things that are readily deterrable, and there are certain things that are not readily deterrable. The Afghan government was not deterred from harboring Osama bin Laden and his people"—even after 9/11, when the Taliban was given an ultimatum. And "Saddam Hussein was not deterred. We didn't want to go to war with Iraq. We went through all this pain at the U.N., went through all these efforts, gave them last chances"—but nothing.

A final question concerning the War on Terror: Will Americans stick with it, or will they get worn down? "They stuck with the Cold War," Rumsfeld quickly notes. "And I think Americans have a good sense of what's important. I have a lot of confidence in people."

As we land at the airport near the Reagan Library, the secretary spots an old plane on the ground and calls back to his wife, "Joyce, do you see that?" "Yes, Rummy," she answers. The secretary was a naval aviator in the '50s, and Mrs. Rumsfeld has already told me, "We lived at the end of every airstrip."

At the library, the event begins with the Pledge of Allegiance. This is not a public school, so there is no trouble. Introducing the speaker, Frederick J. Ryan, chairman of the board here, says, "Americans are very fortunate that he is secretary of defense, and America's enemies are very unfortunate." Rumsfeld proceeds to wow 'em (which is easy, granted). And, hours later, at the end of a long day, he pulls away in an SUV—still chipper, still jaunty, still grinning, still bouncing, still shiny, evidently loving what he's doing, and having no doubts about the justice of it. **NR**

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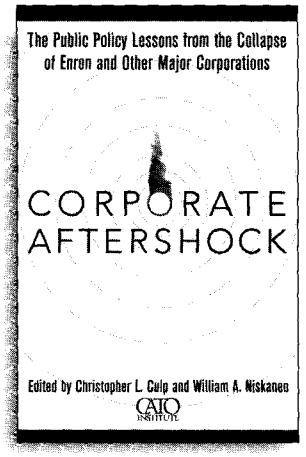
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■ FOREIGN POLICY

Into Cuba

The embargo must go

JAMES W. SYMINGTON

THE subject of Cuba and U.S. policy toward that troubled and ill-governed island has surfaced again in the highest quarters of our land. The island was discovered by Columbus on October 27, 1492. Four hundred and ten years later it became a republic. On May 20, 1902, one Tomás Estrada Palma assumed the presidency of the fledgling nation. He was hand-picked by Maj. Gen. Leonard Wood, serving the administration of President McKinley. Cuba's race and class divisions reflected four centuries of Spanish colonial rule and an economic dependence on slavery, up until the 1870s. In the 19th century, disparate elements of Cuban society—planters, peasants, and slaves—coalesced to oppose Spanish rule. In a succession of bloody conflicts and cruel reprisals, the toll in lives was staggering.

The word filibuster, deriving from the Dutch for freebooter or buccaneer, was early on applied to American adventurers who sought to take a hand in wresting Cuba from Spain. Presidents Polk, Taylor, Fillmore, Pierce, and Buchanan tried to discourage these incursions as a violation of U.S. and international law. In 1850, Gov. John Quitman of Mississippi, having conspired to support an expeditionary force under the command of Cuban rebel leader Narciso López, was indicted under federal law. Nothing daunted, Señor López organized another expedition. The good ship *Pampero*, on August 3, 1851, steamed from New Orleans with 400 unlucky lads, including Cuban and Hungarian exiles and some 200 young American adventurers.

A week later with high hopes they landed at Playtas, 140 miles from Havana. The anticipated Cuban uprising against the Spanish did not occur. The invasion party marched six miles and encountered Spanish forces that defeated them handily. The fifty who had fled back to their ship were intercepted by Spanish gunboats, returned to shore, summarily tried, and shot. López was captured and publicly garroted. One hundred and sixty young Americans were sent to prison in Spain. Embarrassing negotiations led to their ransom and return, a painful precursor to our buy-back of the ill-fated Brigade at the Bay of Pigs.

But homegrown rebellion on the island did eventually take hold, gaining traction in the ten-year war that began in 1868, and in José Martí's War of Independence of 1895. Came then the explosion of the battleship *Maine* on February 15, 1898, U.S. intervention, victory, occupation, and the subsequent efforts of two McKinley-appointed governors to establish an infrastructure and seed the rudiments of democracy.

Mr. Symington, former Democratic congressman, senatorial candidate, and chief of protocol, was a member of the bipartisan delegation that visited Cuba in 1996.

A NEW CUBA

The delegates to the first Cuban constitutional convention in 1900 were educated men who knew well enough the difference between independence and the regime they were being asked to accept as a condition of raising their own flag. The ringer was the so-called Platt Amendment to the Cuban Constitution, passed not by their Congress, but by ours. Fashioned by our secretary of war, Elihu Root, and placed before the U.S. Congress by Sen. Orville Platt of Connecticut, it entitled the U.S. to intervene decisively in Cuba's internal and external affairs whenever such intervention was deemed necessary: to enhance stability on the island, oversee its debt, ensure sanitation measures, accommodate U.S. naval bases, and guard against anything's being done in Cuba that would imperil U.S. interests.

The Platt Amendment was abrogated in 1934 under FDR. It is unremembered in the United States, but well remembered in Cuba. The pejorative *Platista* as a term of disparagement has entered their lexicon. The memory of it is a factor in U.S.-Cuban relations. At the time of Cuban independence, Secretary of State John Hay observed that "dealing with Cuba is like trying to conduct a polite conversation with a squirrel on your lap." Sixty years after Cuban independence, I served as administrative assistant to Attorney General Robert Kennedy during the Cuban Missile Crisis; I would have upgraded the metaphor from squirrel in our lap to bear in our backyard. The sigh of collective relief when Khrushchev blinked and turned his ships back from the quarantine line was heard around the world.

More decades have passed since that high-water mark of nuclear threat, generated by the supremely poor joint judgment of Messrs. Castro and Khrushchev. And the last fourteen of those years have seen Cuba struggling to revive an economy shattered by the collapse of the Soviet Union and the resulting termination of its $10 billion annual Cuban subsidy. The good news is the economic blow was so severe that Castro had to allow creeping capitalism to soften it. Beauty parlors and pet shops could be operated on free-market terms; also restaurants in private homes, if no more than 12 patrons were present at any one time. If Pablo is No. 13 at the door, he'll have to wait outside under the kindly surveillance of the police.

But the doleful consequences of the Soviet sayonara were obvious to all of us on the six-man, bipartisan delegation of current and former members of Congress. With a grant from the Ford Foundation, the delegation gained the permission of both governments to travel to Cuba in 1996. In that year, some 60,000 other Americans visited, without U.S. permission. The number is now pushing 200,000 per annum, and one assumes from administration pronouncements that Treasury and Justice will come down harder on such lawbreakers.

Well briefed in advance of our trip by U.S. government officials, congressmen and staff, human-rights activists, and other knowledgeable folks, we also consulted with Cuban officials, including Ricardo Alarcon, the smooth, well-informed president of the National Assembly, Castro's kept legislature. We met as well with middle-level bureaucrats, farmers, industrial spokesmen, church leaders, students and faculty of Havana University,

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foreign diplomats, and private citizens—including members of the "dissident" community, their names given to us by their Miami-based former countrymen. Dr. Castro himself was preoccupied with a gaggle of Foreign Ministers, which, I am told, was just as well, as he prefers monologue to dialogue. In any event, though we had diverse viewpoints going into Cuba, these merged on return in a unanimous report to Congress, with observations and conclusions seconded by two subsequent congressional visits. They all called for unrestricted travel and an end to the embargo. My own observations:

Cuba's physical plant and infrastructure are in a shambles. The termination of the annual Soviet subsidy was devastating. The consequent decline in oil consumption from 13 million to 8 million barrels a year is reflected in the wretched state of public services and utilities. Wheezing, overcrowded buses inch along past endless lines of patient commuters. Bicycles built for one but carrying two compete for space on the potholed streets with a generation of dented and fuming vehicles that went into honorable retirement everywhere else in the world forty years ago. As European and Canadian tourism grows, the grand façades of old Havana, crumbling from neglect, are only just now beginning to receive the attentions of local and foreign architects and builders.

In sum, if the intent of the past two generations of U.S. policy towards Cuba has been to render its economy comatose—energy consumption cut in half, vehicular travel horse- and mule-drawn or fixed in time to the 1950s, agricultural production inadequate, diet restricted, plumbing and street lamps nonoperational, professional classes earning less than busboys in the gleaming Veradero tourist hotels, and too many of her fairest daughters walkers of the night streets—I would have to pronounce the policy an unqualified success. If, however, the intent for the past four decades has been to alter Cuba's form of government or to remove its leader, well, we know the answer to that. Someone once defined insanity as the constant repetition of the same act in expectation of a different result. Granted, the same can be said of Dr. Castro. Feeling the hot breath of incipient entrepreneurship, he now requests his people to engrave socialism in their Constitution. His request is their command. Well balanced, these twin insanities are lighting our way, so to speak, into the 21st century.

Bear in mind that the original rationale for the embargo and ancillary policies, in 1960, was to protest Cuba's expropriation of American properties and her progressive satellization by the Soviet Union. The latter ended, along with the Soviet subsidy, 13 years ago, at which point the dagger at our throat became an orphan at our doorstep. A further concern, that Cuba was exporting revolution, has also faded into a history replete with democratic progress throughout the hemisphere as well as the accepted failure of doctrinaire socialism as a viable road to prosperity in Cuba itself.

Embargoing a socialist country per se does not commend itself as national policy. Certainly not to the pope, or the prominent lay Baptist, Jimmy Carter. The list of skeptics of our present policy includes governors, U.S. senators, state legislators, and the entire agricultural community except producers of sugar, rum, and cigars. Meanwhile, disinterested observers—and that would include most Americans—can be forgiven for wondering what exactly are the immunizing charms of Red China, North Korea, and North Vietnam, whose forces have killed or maimed hundreds of thousands of young Americans, which remain ruthless Communist dictatorships, yet are considered more deserving of U.S. outreach and qualified for U. S. trade, than this impoverished island under the cruel governance of one who can threaten his own people but no longer ours. Why this distinction?

The voice of the embargo is the voice of the United States. But the hand is that of Little Havana. In its relentless squeeze we are allowing, nay, insisting, that one megalomaniacal, septuagenarian ideologue and his cadre of automatons keep us apart. What about Castro himself? There is never any excuse for a slavemaster, but it repays the time given to reflect on his predecessors. I went to the encyclopedia for an objective description of the regimes that governed the pre-Castro Cuban Republic. One could list the names of the some dozen caudillos who exercised power before the Batista coup of 1952. Suffice to say that despite the high-sounding and unimplemented Constitution of 1940, no Cuban leader's name is revered in Miami. If the name of José Martí is evoked, recall that he was the leader of Cuba's 1895 revolution, and was killed that same year in a gun battle with Spanish forces, depriving Cuba of a truly democratic progenitor.

The voice of the embargo is the voice of the United States. But the hand is that of Little Havana.

Respecting Cuba's regime immediately pre-Castro, the encyclopedia has this to say: "Cuban politics before 1959 consisted of graft, corruption, maladministration, fiscal irresponsibility, and social insensitivity especially toward Afro-Cubans. Foreign [read U.S.] interests controlled the economy, owning 75% of the arable land, 90% of the essential services, and 40% of the sugar production. Income from sugar was augmented by a vigorous tourist business based on hotels, casinos, and brothels. Havana became especially attractive during the years of U.S. Prohibition as a source of liquors and pleasure. Yet the prosperity of the 20s, 30s, 40s, and 50s enriched only a few Cubans, mainly politicians and their families. The average rural worker earned $91 a year."

That was the apple cart the Jesuit-schooled Fidel set out to upset. Latin American Communist movements were alive and assertive when Fidel, who initially disdained Communism and criticized its restrictions on human rights, came of age as a ranking law-school graduate, well-read in the classics and a renowned baseball and basketball player. But the lure of the Left could be detected, and the siren song of socialism was evident in a letter he wrote, I believe from jail, at age 25: "With what joy would I bring revolution to this country from top to bottom! I would be disposed to draw on me the hate and ill will of one or two thousand people, among them some relations, half my

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friends, two-thirds of my colleagues, and four-fifths of my old comrades at university. Have you noticed the number of invisible links which a man who is anxious to live in accord with his ideas must break? What makes me suffer most, is to think that if all the generous men there are on earth were to respond to our appeal, all the charlatans, parasites, mediocrities, and egoists of every kidney would vanish at once."

Fidel's deliberate alienation not only of friends but of family, in pursuit of his rapidly reddening star, was reciprocal. Most fled to the United States, including some of the finest families, plus the cream of the business, professional, and academic communities. Some of the homebound dissidents ruefully commented on the relative ease of opposing Castroism—from Florida.

WILL THE MAJORITY RULE?

Cuban charm, expressed especially in music and dance, continues to work its way into the eyes and ears of cultural sensibility. There is a mild uneasiness with our official policy of blanket rejection. I say mild because the Cuban question is not of the first importance in any but one or two of the fifty states of the Union. Yet the policy of enforced isolation is insisted upon by the first wave of Cuban émigrés to this country—men and women gifted, resourceful, and well organized, who left all behind and understandably would like to recruit Uncle Sam to get it all back, either as restored citizens of a new Cuba or as newly minted Americans merely following the old example of their countrymen.

tion. This, however, is a back-burner question, reserved for that great day in the morning: normalization of relations.

How do we get there, and what do we do for the rest of the night? That is the core question we put to the human-rights activists within Cuba we were explicitly told to consult by their anxious brethren in the émigré community. First, we asked what they thought of Helms-Burton. Most Americans would probably identify Helms-Burton in a multiple-choice questionnaire as a vintage British automobile. But as the restrictive U.S. law, it has been big news in Cuba and the regular object of well-orchestrated island-wide demonstrations and protests. It is the law that tightens the embargo and punishes not only Americans but other folks who test it. We call it, said one whimsical dissident, "The Helms-Burton-Castro Act." Why? Because it gives El Supremo one more reason to blame the U.S. for an economy sagging of its own miserable socialist weight. Again, we asked, what to do? Simple, they said. Dispatch a fleet of cruise ships to Cuban coasts, with air cover by Pan Am or its successors, dump Americans on this island from one end to the other, and the spirit of change will take wing.

Mind you, we were not talking to the Cuban Chamber of Commerce, or any other official spokesmen for that tight little island, but *to the dissidents*—who were clearly saying: *The more America, the better.* Curious to hear, at this end: the *less* America, the better. Curious, too, that the latter voices dominate the former.

It is arguable that majorities in America rule only when they care to.

It is arguable that majorities in America rule only when they care to. Until then, some foreign policies derive from the focused efforts of well-educated, well-financed, and firmly dedicated minorities. During my race for the Senate from Missouri 26 years ago, I gave a light-hearted talk entitled "Toward an American Foreign Policy"—as distinct from a hyphenated American foreign policy. It was embellished with a reference to George Washington's admonition on foreign entanglements. My campaign managers correctly pronounced this the stupidest of my several mistakes. I was certainly taken to task by every spokesman for the revealed truths of each of our politically active minorities.

Nevertheless, there is in the case of Cuba one inconsistency on the part of the pro-embargo community that would seem glaring enough to give hypocrisy a bad name. We insist that Uncle Sam do nothing to replenish the coffers of the Castro government. Yet, if *60 Minutes* correctly calculated, nearly $1 billion dollars per year are sent to Cubans by expatriate friends and families. The dollars are spent in dollar stores owned and operated by? The Cuban government. By the way, anxious as we are for Cuba to make restitution for nationalized properties, is it sensible to hobble post-Castro Cuba's ability to do so? Then again, our international lawyers may be tasked to prepare a response to Cuba's likely suggestion that the costs to her of the 40-year embargo should offset, perhaps exceed, the costs of expropria-

Now, before I'm taken away for questioning, I wistfully recall the sage words of President Ronald Reagan in his 1984 address to the Kennan Institute on U.S.-Soviet Exchanges: "The way governments can best promote contacts among people is by not standing in the way." The fall of the Soviet Union was still five years off, so he was talking about contacts with the Evil Empire, the main repository of real and present danger. In the darkest days of the Cold War it was President Eisenhower who inaugurated the famous People to People exchanges with the USSR. Are the people of a defanged Cuba less deserving of such consideration? For balance let us now listen to President Clinton, in his second State of the Union address: "We must pursue a deeper dialogue with China for the the sake of our interests and our ideals. An isolated China is not good for America. . . . Engaging China is the best way to work on our common challenges . . . and to deal frankly with our fundamental differences like human rights." China *sí*, Cuba *no*?

May I conclude by suggesting to anyone who for any reason is a staunch supporter of the embargo and our policy of isolation and wishes to remain comfortable with that view, do not visit Cuba. But to anyone willing to expose such bias to the hazards of inquiry, by all means go if legally permitted. *Vaya con Dios*, and enjoy the company of a bright, lively, gracious, artistic, fun-loving, and amazingly cheerful and friendly crowd, the Cuban people. **NR**

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the long view

ROB LONG

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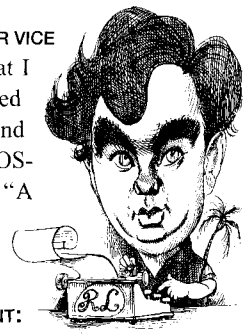
Democratic National Convention
July 26–29, 2004
Fleet Center, Boston

Tentative Breakdown

OPENING CEREMONY: Dixie Chicks (status: CONFIRMED)

KEYNOTE ADDRESS: Gov. Howard Dean, "The Fight Lives On, and Stuff"

NOMINATION SPEECH FOR VICE PRESIDENT: Sen. Joe Lieberman (note: must have only kosher snacks in green room) OR Sen. John Kerry (note: must have some kosher snacks in green room)



ACCEPTANCE OF THE NOMINATION FOR VICE PRESIDENT: Gen. Wesley Clark, "What I Meant When I Said . . ." (note: will need clips/photos/uniformed personnel behind podium and in hot clusters on floor) POSSIBLE FLIP: Sen. Bob Graham: "A Step-by-Step Guide to My Friends in Florida on the Proper Use of the Ballot-Marking Stylus"

NOMINATION SPEECH FOR PRESIDENT: Ambassador Carol Moseley Braun

ACCEPTANCE OF THE NOMINATION FOR PRESIDENT: Sen. Hillary Clinton, "You Like Me, You Really Like Me" (status: CONFIRMED)

Visuals:

"We Support the Troops" Parade, including video-conferencing with actual troops in Iraq (note: find actual troops in Iraq)

"Hola!" Univision/Telemundo installation on floor, with tortilla press and colorful piñatas (note: sync with daytime telenovelas for live cutaways)

"Deficit Sack Race": kids of all races and creeds footrace with sacks full of rocks, symbolizing crushing debt burden for their generation

Possible "Specials" for daytime:

Pie-eating contest (per Sen. Kennedy)

Drum circle

Freedom Trail walk with Rev. Al Sharpton (note: Sharpton WILL NEED golf and snack carts for walk)

"Make Way for Ducklings" tour with "The Barb(a)ras" (status: Sen. Boxer CONFIRMED; Streisand needs more details)

Acting Workshop (note: may need to limit number of actors)

Follow-on tasks:

American Flag Pins (need 76,000)

Bill Clinton laryngitis

Terry McAuliffe trip to Afghanistan

Kennedy containment

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NOT FOR RELEASE

Republican National Convention
August 30–September 2, 2004
New York, NY

Tentative Breakdown

OPENING CEREMONY: Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger (check with pyro-effects in re AS's request to "freakin' just appear in a cloud of smoke and all those things, from the sky like a bird or whatever") (status: UNCONFIRMED)

KEYNOTE ADDRESS: Mayor Rudy Giuliani, "A Time For Heroes" (status: CONFIRMED) (note: His Honor interested in referencing his time as a houseguest of a gay couple—please circle back via Rove et al. on this) OR Gov. Schwarzenegger, "Terminate the Tax-and-Spenders" (per his team; needs to be refined)

NOMINATION SPEECH FOR VICE PRESIDENT: Vice President Dick Cheney (via satellite from Walter Reed) OR Mayor Giuliani, "Still A Time For Heroes" (see note above) OR Gov. Schwarzenegger, "Let's Freakin' Kick Their Butts and All of Those Things" (need coordination here)

ACCEPTANCE OF THE NOMINATION FOR VICE PRESIDENT: Vice President Cheney (via satellite from Walter Reed) OR National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice (status: UNCONFIRMED but likely)

NOMINATION SPEECH FOR PRESIDENT: Mayor Rudy Giuliani, "Heroes and Hopes: A Time for Heroes, Again" (see note above) OR Gov. Schwarzenegger, "Terminate the Terrorists with Eye Lasers and Relentless Killing Machines" (note: NEED guidance here)

ACCEPTANCE OF THE NOMINATION FOR PRESIDENT: POTUS (note: Noonan?)

Visuals:

"We Support the Troops and They Don't" Parade, including video-conferencing with actual troops in Iraq (note: find troops from PA, FL, WI, MN, CA)

"Hola!" Univision/Telemundo installation on floor, with tortilla press and colorful piñatas (note: sync with daytime telenovelas for live cutaways)

"Tax Burden Sack Race": kids of all races and creeds footrace with sacks full of rocks, symbolizing crushing tax burden for their generation

Possible "Specials" for daytime:

"Arm Wrestle The Terminator": Gov. Schwarzenegger playfully arm-wrestles with New York children of all races and creeds

Ground Zero tour with Mayor Giuliani (note: will need to plan a spontaneous firefighters something-or-other for this event)

"Heroes and Hoagies" sack-lunch discussion with Mayor Giuliani

"Denny Hastert Loses 15 Pounds": workout with Gov. Schwarzenegger

Follow-on tasks:

American Flag Pins (need 238,678)

American Flags (need approx. 853,920)

Kennedy containment (per Gov. Schwarzenegger)

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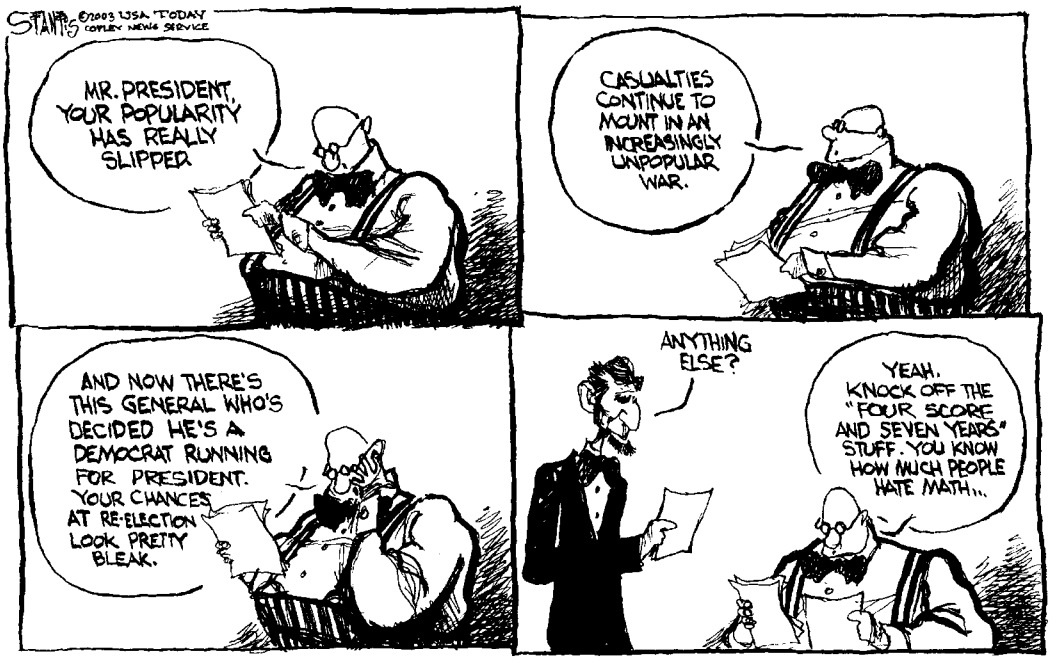
HELP

FOR PRESIDENT
IT'S FAIRLY OBVIOUS. SINCE THEY HAVEN'T FOUND ANY WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION, IT IS CLEAR THEY NEVER EXISTED...
THEY HAVEN'T FOUND SADDAM HUSSEIN. DOES THAT MEAN HE NEVER EXISTED?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MR. PRESIDENT, YOUR POPULARITY HAS REALLY SLIPPED
CASUALTIES CONTINUE TO MOUNT IN AN INCREASINGLY UNPOPULAR WAR.
AND NOW THERE'S THIS GENERAL WHO'S DECIDED HE'S A DEMOCRAT RUNNING FOR PRESIDENT. YOUR CHANCES AT RE-ELECTION LOOK PRETTY BLEAK.
ANYTHING ELSE?
YEAH. KNOCK OFF THE "FOUR SCORE AND SEVEN YEARS" STUFF. YOU KNOW HOW MUCH PEOPLE HATE MATH...

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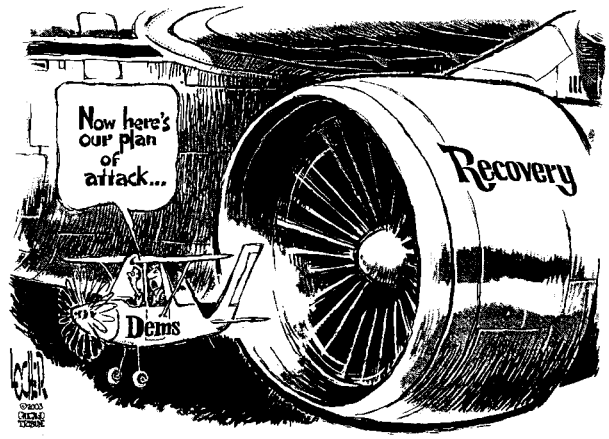
California's Calling

The Clintons quietly slink off.
The Kennedys, uneasy, cough,
As Teddy's diastolic hits
Another high; it's, like, the pits.
There's more: Latinos—almost half—
Mob Arnold, while, having a calf
That could turn out to be a cow,
Boxer sweats copiously. Wow.

—W. H. von Dreele



*"Because there are things that men are better off not knowing—*that's *why you should never read your sister's diary."*

"BECAUSE OF A BASEBALL GAME?? YOU'RE JOKING, RIGHT??"

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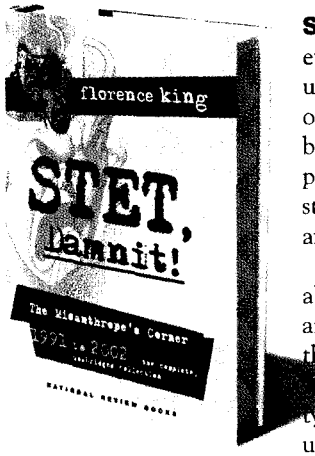

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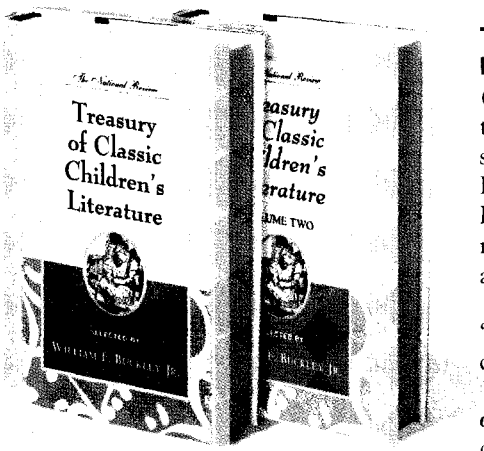

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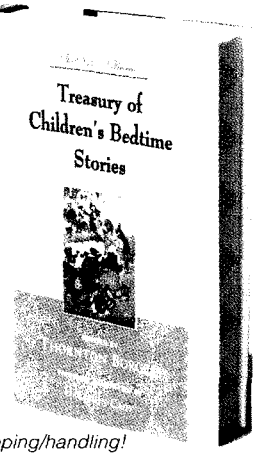

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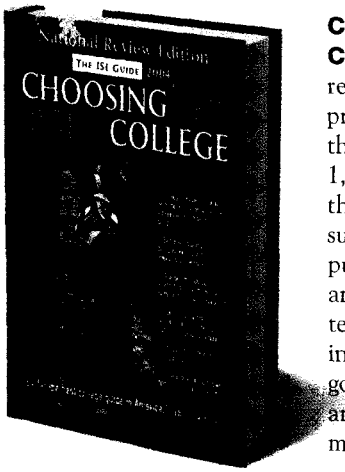

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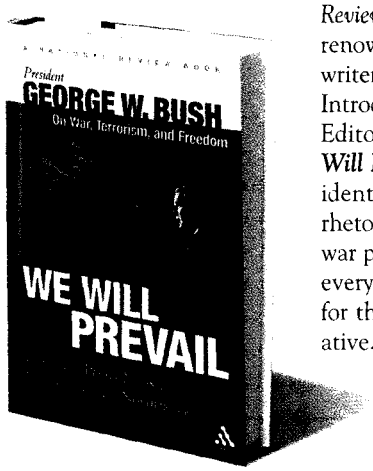

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The Content of His Character

Legacy: Paying the Price for the Clinton Years, by Rich Lowry
(Regnery, 470 pp., $27.95)

MONA CHAREN

In the course of a lunch with a prominent liberal journalist recently, I was asked why the Right hated Clinton so much. I wasn't surprised to be asked. Liberals believe that the enmity Clinton engendered had little to do with the man himself but was rather a symptom of something dark in us. In fact, last July, the *Bulletin* of the American Psychological Association published a study purporting to analyze "50 years of literature about the psychology of conservatism." Four researchers from the University of California at Berkeley, Stanford, and the University of Maryland concluded that conservatives are characterized by "fear and aggression, dogmatism," . . . blah, blah, blah. Funny how academia and James Carville are hard to distinguish.

Mona Charen is a nationally syndicated columnist and author of *Useful Idiots: How Liberals Got It Wrong in the Cold War and Still Blame America First.*

I told my interlocutor that Clinton and Mrs. Senator Rodham represented many things we conservatives dislike about the '60s generation—moral preening, personal weakness, contempt for "middle America," self-indulgence, hypocrisy, and soft-headedness. To this stew was added the Clintons' unique blend of rancid corruption, low-life habits, and staggering deception. For myself, it was the cataract of lies—lies about small things and large—that turned dislike to hatred. To adapt Mary McCarthy's famous quip about Lillian Hellman, nearly "every word [he] ever spoke was a lie, including 'and' and 'the.'"

But such questions may never again be raised at lunches, because with *Legacy* Rich Lowry has settled the matter. In a comprehensive overview of the Clinton presidency, Lowry refutes the central claim of the Clinton defenders—that the man's personal squalor was separate from his leadership. What Lowry has done is peel back the layers of spin that have encrusted the Clinton years and concentrate on what President Clinton actually did with his eight years in office. Lowry has done it with the clarity, wit, and exactitude on which readers of this magazine have come to rely. But *Legacy*'s greatest strength is its fairness. It is Clinton's misfortune that Lowry is both just and devastating.

If there is one thing most Americans would agree on and all Democrats insist upon it is that Clinton engineered a great economy during the 1990s. It is obvious that the economy thrived in the 1990s, but Clinton's contribution to this result was nugatory. In 1992, he campaigned dishonestly against "the worst economy in 50 years"; in fact, the recession that tripped up his predecessor had already ended as Clinton spoke, and was in any case not even as deep as the recession of the early 1980s, only ten years before.

The spinners, Mrs. Clinton most prominent among them, claim that Bill Clinton's hard work created the roaring '90s. What was the Clinton economic magic that stoked the great boom? The Clinton budget was designed to reduce the deficit—which, the administration claimed, would in turn cause interest rates to drop. In fact, as Robert Reich, Clinton's secretary of labor, admitted, "This theory is easy to state with conviction, but it is impossible to prove. Look back several decades and you see no direct relationship between deficits and interest rates." No, Lowry elaborates, "because inflation and the real return on investments, not deficits, drive interest rates." The Clinton budget was presented in February 1994. Over the course of the following year, the Fed raised interest rates seven times. Long-term rates reached a ten-year high in November 1994.

In any case, as Lowry explains, the deficit was already declining when Clinton took office (just as, by the way, the economy was declining when Bush II took office). Clinton policy changes had little to do with subsequent deficit reduction. It was the growing economy and the discipline imposed by Congress that mattered most. As Lowry explains, it was "a $29 billion cut in defense spending from 1992 to 1995 that accounted for all of the deficit reduction from Clinton's policy changes."

Lowry does not deny that Clinton got some things right. He pushed hard for NAFTA, and then followed up with a strong endorsement of the WTO. Lowry believes that Clinton's support for China's entry into the WTO helped double America's real exports during the decade. But, at the end of the day, it was Alan Greenspan's tight grip on the money supply that kept inflation low, and it was the election of the Republican Congress in 1994 that brought true fiscal discipline. As for the rest, the American private sector must take all the bows. "All Clinton had to do," Lowry writes, "was enjoy the results of broad, felicitous economic forces." And he quotes none other than former Clinton secretary of commerce and trade representative Mickey Kantor, who said, "No one should claim that what we did, what President Clinton did, created the eight most productive years in the history of the United States. No one should claim that."

Oh but they do. And they further

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applaud themselves for welfare reform, the decade's greatest domestic accomplishment. Clinton does deserve full credit for having alienated American voters to the point that they elected a Republican Congress. Other than that, his contribution to welfare reform was to block it in every way possible. Only at the last minute, when Dick Morris convinced him that a *third* veto of welfare reform would cost him the 1996 election, did he sulkily sign the legislation.

The topic most likely to send readers to the medicine cabinet for the Tums is not Monica Lewinsky—though that tawdry spectacle is given brisk and clarifying attention—but the foreign-policy chapters, which document the utter recklessness, shallowness, solipsism, and unfitness for office of President Bill Clinton. After Clinton's weak-minded decision to avoid confrontation with Serbia, the Bosnian Serbs rolled over their neighbors. One of the worst incidents was the massacre of 7,000 Muslim men and boys in Srebrenica in July 1995 by Serbian war-criminal Ratko Mladic. Lowry writes, "The U.N. had turned down five requests from Dutch peacekeepers for NATO air strikes when Mladic was on the march. Clinton shouted at Sandy Berger, accentuating the first person in the growing debacle, 'I'm getting creamed.' He had a limitless capacity to interpret any event, even faraway slaughters, through the prism of his own ego."

Bill Clinton spent more money conducting polls than all of the other presidents in U.S. history combined. Polling substituted for leadership, and public relations commonly trumped substance. In November 1995, a bomb exploded at the offices of the Saudi National Guard, killing five Americans. Seven months later, the Khobar Towers complex was bombed, killing 19 Americans. Lowry writes, "For the Clinton team, desperate times called for the usual measures—a poll. Dick Morris noted in a memo a few days after the terror strike: 'Saudi bombing—recovered from Friday and looking great. Approve Clinton handling 73–20. Big gain from 63–20 on Friday. Security was adequate 52–40. It's not Clinton's fault 76–18.'"

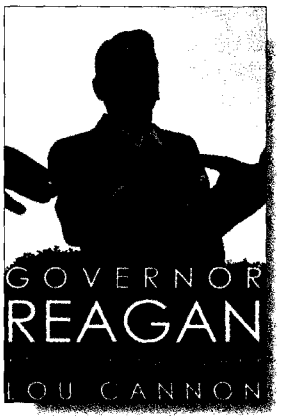
Clinton's mawkish embrace of Yasser Arafat—what the State Department preferred to label the "peace process"—endangered Israel's security and demeaned the United States. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright once literally ran after Arafat—who had stalked away from the negotiating table—shouting, "Shut the gates!" And her predecessor, Warren Christopher, visited Syria's dictator Hafez el-Assad twenty times in four years, becoming "literally a pain in the neck." Lowry quotes Christopher's memoir: "The structure of our encounters was so fixed and familiar that when, after two years of these meetings, Assad decided I should sit in his customary chair and he in mine, he explained through his translator that he'd been having neck pains and his doctor thought they might be caused by his having to turn in the same direction every time he addressed me."

Clinton dearly hoped that the "peace process" would prove his legacy—and it did, in a way. His pusillanimity in the face of one of the world's most successful terrorists, Arafat, was duplicated in his response to Osama bin Laden and Saddam Hussein. Having responded to the dual bombings of U.S. embassies in Africa with a pin prick, he didn't respond to the bombing of the USS *Cole* at all, choosing to view it not as an attack upon the United States but as an effort to "derail" the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians. "If [the terrorists'] intention was to deter us from our mission of promoting peace and security in the Middle East, they will fail utterly," Clinton pronounced.

But their intentions were quite otherwise. By proving the United States so weak and indecisive throughout the 1990s, Clinton convinced our enemies that we were, in the words of Osama bin Laden, "a paper tiger."

One quibble with this otherwise outstanding book: the endnotes. Lowry has long and delicious footnotes tucked at the end of the book. This is distracting. If something is worth saying, it's worth putting in the text—or at least in a note at the bottom of the page. Including all of the footnoted material in the text would have made for a longer book—but when the prose is as swift and skillful as Lowry's, that is no disadvantage. **NR**

The Governor Prevaileth



Governor Reagan: His Rise to Power, by Lou Cannon (PublicAffairs, 592 pp., $30)

EDWIN MEESE III

LOU CANNON has become the premier biographer of Ronald Reagan. As a journalist, he covered Reagan's political career from his days in California through his two terms in the White House. Cannon's first book, *Ronnie and Jesse: A Political Odyssey*, covered the early years of Reagan's governorship, and his dealings with Assembly Speaker Jesse Unruh; a sequel, *Reagan*, dealt primarily with his quest for the presidency; *President Reagan* recounted the White House years. This new book, *Governor Reagan*, provides a much more in-depth study of the Sacramento years, as well as a detailed account of Reagan's life before the governorship.

As Cannon recounts, Reagan showed considerable leadership qualities very early in life. He was president of the student body at his high school and president of the student council at Eureka College,

Mr. Meese is the Ronald Reagan Distinguished Fellow in Public Policy at the Heritage Foundation. He served as Governor Reagan's chief of staff in Sacramento, and later as U.S. attorney general.

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from which he graduated with a degree in economics. Reagan also demonstrated an entrepreneurial spirit, a willingness to work hard, and a persistence in seeking and achieving his goals, during his years as a radio sports broadcaster and then as a Hollywood actor. After World War II, he became president of his union, the Screen Actors Guild. Elected to six terms by his fellow actors, he led the Guild and other Hollywood unions in combating the Communists who were trying to take over the motion-picture industry. This experience had a profound effect on Reagan and caused him to do a great deal of reading and study about Communist doctrine and practices, which helped him form the concepts and strategies that he would use later when, as president, he had to deal with the Soviet Union.

In 1966, Reagan ran for governor against a popular incumbent who was seeking a third term. He won by almost a million votes, and proceeded to tackle the greatest leadership challenge he had yet encountered. Lou Cannon began his coverage of Reagan during the 1966 campaign, as a reporter for the *San Jose Mercury News*, and then followed the governor during his two terms. Cannon is thus an expert on the California politics of that era, and is able to give a fascinating account of Reagan's eight years in office. He describes how the financial manipulations of his predecessor caused Reagan to have to seek new taxes during his first year as governor, in order to comply with the constitutional requirement of a balanced budget by the end of the fiscal year—just six months after he was inaugurated. Taking on this unpleasant duty, Reagan also pledged to "cut, squeeze, and trim" big government and to return to the people any tax savings that were achieved by such actions. Over the course of eight years he accomplished refunds of the income tax, and property-tax relief as well.

As Cannon shows in detail, Reagan was frequently underestimated—first during the 1966 campaign and then by opponents in the state legislature, both houses of which were in the hands of the Democrats. In pursuit of his legislative goals, Reagan adopted a political style that would, Cannon writes, "guide his governorship and foreshadow his presidency on issues ranging from taxes to arms control. It was a style that owed much to his days in the Screen Actors Guild, where he had mastered the art of negotiation." A decade and a half later, Mikhail Gorbachev would see this skill in action.

Perhaps the greatest example of Reagan's talent as a negotiator was the California welfare-reform effort of 1971. The governor was informed that unless the burgeoning costs of social welfare could be curbed, there would have to be another tax increase. He therefore appointed a task force of government and private-sector officials who had one quality in common: None of them had ever been involved in welfare policy. Reagan asked them to come up with a plan for welfare as though they were starting from scratch, with no preconceived ideas—one that would provide for the truly needy but also remove from the rolls those who were undeserving of public support.

The task force's recommendations were turned into a legislative proposal, which Reagan sought to present to the legislature in a joint session. When the Speaker of the Assembly denied him that opportunity, Reagan went over the heads of the legislature to the people of California, and energized such support for his ideas that the legislative leaders finally agreed to negotiate. Cannon describes how Reagan dealt face to face with his opponents in these talks, often beginning at 9 A.M. and lasting well into the evening. Ultimately, the negotiations were successful, a bill was enacted, and California became a national leader in welfare reform.

Some readers will be surprised by Reagan's record on the environment in California. Cannon recounts that Reagan appointed leading conservationists to key positions in the departments that dealt with water, parks, timberland, and other natural resources. With their help, Reagan made decisions that saved a picturesque valley from flooding for a water project, preserved extensive wilderness areas in the Sierra Nevada Mountains, and added much acreage to the state park system. On one occasion, Cannon reports, Reagan led his cabinet on a two-day field inspection of wilderness lands (which he later protected against a proposed highway).

Reagan's success in solving problems and building support for his ideas—whether it was a matter of protecting the environment, confronting troubles at the state universities, or achieving welfare reform—was a result not just of his negotiating skills but also of his basic amiability. It was hard for even his opponents to dislike a man who was so friendly and straightforward. While he stood his ground on policy issues, Reagan knew that it was important to give his opponents a graceful way out of a political conflict. This approach was extremely valuable because of the realities of the position in which Reagan found himself, both in Sacramento and, later, in Washington: Republicans controlled the legislature during only two of Reagan's eight years as governor; similarly, they never held a majority in the House of Representatives while Reagan was in the White House. Cannon shows how Reagan's personal style enabled him to accomplish his objectives in so many instances when the political odds were against him.

In summing up Reagan's achievements as governor, Cannon concludes that "from a standing start as a governmental novice, he mastered the intricacies of governing the nation's most populous and macroscopic state. He roused the public and demonstrated, as no one had done before him, that it is possible to succeed as governor of a major state without abandoning conservative convictions." *Governor Reagan* goes beyond the eight years in Sacramento, as Cannon explores the interim period leading up to Reagan's successful 1980 presidential bid.

Lou Cannon's insightful knowledge of his subject, his entertaining writing style, and his excellent research make *Governor Reagan* an invaluable book about a remarkable man. Cannon's access to the previously unpublished minutes of Reagan's California cabinet meetings and the contemporaneous notes of several participants in the Sacramento administration give this book an impressive authenticity. Despite the inevitable minor inaccuracies and occasional incomplete accounts, the book overall is a remarkable chronicle of the events leading up to the Reagan presidency. It provides fascinating reading and a rich account of an important era. **NR**

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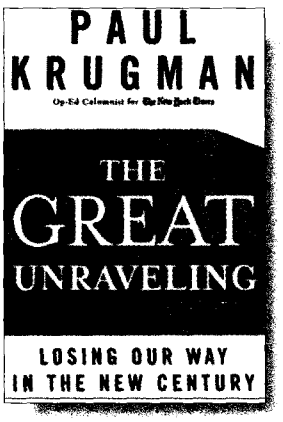

The Great Unraveling: Losing Our Way in the New Century, by Paul Krugman (Norton, 320 pp., $25.95)

DONALD L. LUSKIN

It is fitting that the first words in this collection of Paul Krugman's *New York Times* columns offer thanks to disgraced former *Times* executive editor Howell Raines. Krugman's meteoric rise—he is now one of America's most influential political columnists—could not have happened without the *New York Times*, and it could not have happened without the *New York Times* of Howell Raines.

Krugman's columns are blisteringly, bitterly, and relentlessly partisan. The column, which he started in 2000, quickly evolved from coverage of business and markets to pure politics—and not a single column has ever either praised Republicans or criticized Democrats. Krugman's attacks on President Bush are intensely personal. Any Bush statement that differs from Krugman's views is, ipso facto, a lie. Krugman compares Bush to Caligula and Captain Queeg, and mocks him for being a recovering alcoholic. His columns are also sloppily researched—often a grab bag of out-of-context factoids from obscure websites and leftist think tanks. And they frequently contain errors, distortions, and misquotations so egregious that they must be assumed to be intentional.

Yet on the pages of the *New York Times*, Krugman's columns are devastatingly effective, providing talking points for liberal pundits and politicians that resonate in the media echo chamber for months after Krugman issues them (". . . according to Paul Krugman in the *New York Times* . . ."). In part this is because they are written with a tone of supreme self-assurance, developed over Krugman's years as an Ivy League economics professor; mostly, though, it's because they are printed in the prestigious and authoritative pages of "the newspaper of record." Krugman is right to thank Howell Raines for allowing him to exploit the power and the glory of the *Times* to lend credibility to what would otherwise be little more than partisan jeremiads.

Krugman's work represents a new Rainesian paradigm for newspaper columns: opinions presented as fact, supported by evidence often drawn from dubious sources far less credible than the *Times*, yet granted the authority of the *Times* by virtue of being published there.

The new book—and the promotional blitz that inevitably accompanies it—may seem to be Krugman's moment of greatest triumph. Yet this is a risky venture for Krugman, because it requires that his columns stand on their merits at a distance from the imprimatur of the *Times*, and that columns originally written as ad hoc potshots at partisan targets of opportunity be knitted together into a coherent worldview.

Krugman's basic argument is that the Bush administration represents a "revolutionary power," a "radical political movement" whose goal is to "destroy much of what is best in our country" and "possibly" make it a place "in which elections are only a formality." In the mathematics of Krugmanomics, disagreement = lie, and two disagreements = conspiracy. That may well resonate with leftists seeking words to match their inchoate feelings of loathing for the president; but the reality of the columns in the book is that they are little more than extremely effective demonstrations of the obvious—that Krugman's idea of "what is best in our country" is different from that of George W. Bush.

Removed from the prestige-brand aura of the *Times*, however, Krugman's columns lose their punch. The qualities that work in newsprint don't work in the book: The columns' relentlessness seems mere repetition, and their breeziness just superficiality. The book is also an exercise in revisionism and selective memory. Of course, a collection of Krugman's columns purged of all that contained errors, distortions, and misquotations would have a page-count of zero; this book was obviously edited with an eye toward keeping the very worst ones stuffed far down the memory hole.

For example, twice in the book's prefatory material Krugman mocks the press for "lauding" Enron. He chooses not to mention, nor to include in the book, his own May 1999 article for *Fortune* in which *he* lauded Enron as an exemplar of the New Economy, witnessing its operations firsthand as a paid member of the company's advisory board. He also fails to include the December 2001 *Times* column in which he chided the press—his example is *Fortune*!—for not heaping blame for the Enron fiasco on the consultants who advised the company. Enron is mentioned in the book many times—always in the most harshly critical tones—but Krugman's own involvement is not disclosed until the very end, and then only en passant as part of a jeremiad about how the conservative media used it to discredit him. He protests that it was "back when I was a college professor, not an Op-Ed columnist, and in no position to do the company any favors." How about that *Fortune* article? (*What* article? I don't see any article!)

Gone, too, are the warnings of this crisis and that crisis, none of which ever materialized. Where's the April 2002 column in which he predicted a third oil crisis? How about the April 2003 column in which he worried that the worldwide spread of SARS would destroy the global economy? (At least he had the good sense to hedge a bit, admitting that it "doesn't look like a civilization-killer.") Also gone are the columns in which Krugman's partisan zeal got in the way of the facts, or of checking the veracity of sources: Where's that July 2002 col-

Mr. Luskin is chief investment officer of Trend Macrolytics LLC, a research firm serving institutional investors. His forthcoming book is *The Conspiracy to Keep You Poor and Stupid.*

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umn in which Krugman claimed that Bush's stake in the Texas Rangers amounted to "a group of businessmen, presumably with some interest in government decisions," giving "a sitting governor a $12 million gift"? As those businessmen explained in a letter to the *Times*, Bush's stake was awarded in 1989—five years before he became "a sitting governor." Krugman admitted the error on his personal website, but never made a retraction in the *Times*.

Experienced Krugman-watchers will not be surprised to learn that the notorious "Jobs, Jobs, Jobs" from last April is not included. There, Krugman, who endlessly accuses the president of lying about the impact of his tax policies, wrote that Bush's proposed tax cuts of $726 billion were intended to create 1.4 million new jobs. He wrote, "The average American worker earns only about $40,000 per year; why does the administration, even on its own estimates, need to offer $500,000 in tax cuts for each job created? If it's all about jobs, wouldn't it be far cheaper just to have the government hire people?" This analysis involves several statistical sleights of hand that add up to one big lie. The $726 billion in tax cuts were to be spread over ten years, while the 1.4 million jobs were only those forecasted to be created in the first 18 months; and the $40,000 is just a single year's salary. Krugman squirmed for weeks when I pointed this out on National Review Online in my "Krugman Truth Squad" column, and posted a series of lame explanations on his personal website; the *Times* never ran a correction or explanation.

A couple of truly embarrassing columns *are* included. Considering the comparison—in the book's introduction—of the Bush administration to "totalitarian regimes in the 1930s," it was a slip to include the October 2002 column in which Krugman blasted Republicans for using "the Hitler analogy" against Democrats. And, considering Krugman's claim in the preface that "I thought stock prices were way out of line" at the top of the market in 2000, he shouldn't have included the February 2000 column in which he wrote, "I'm not sure that the current value of the Nasdaq is justified, but I'm not sure that it isn't." Apparently he's sure *now*.

Krugman's book is, in a sense, a correction: a special kind of no-more-tears correction, in which the columnist has the luxury of eliminating for posterity the things he's sorry he said, and adding the things he wishes he'd said. Yet this self-serving deportation of troublesome past columns to some literary gulag is, at its heart, a great confession of weakness—and weakness is the one thing that must never be confessed by anyone who would hurl thunderbolts from the Olympus of the *New York Times*. Howell Raines was banished from that mountain. How long will Paul Krugman dwell there? **NR**

FAILURE

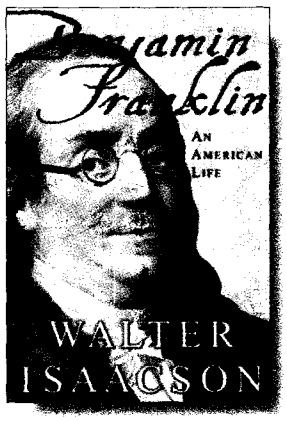
As with any child, you find your own more beautiful—
eager to nurse it along, watch over it,
and taking special pride as each day
it grows more gorgeously like you.

Why not consider it a sort of accomplishment?
Failure doesn't happen by itself. It takes time,
effort, and a certain undeniable gift.
Satisfaction comes from recognizing what you do best.

Most of what happens is never intended,
but deep inside you know you planned this—
not a slip or a fumble but a total rout.
You only fail at what you really aim for.

—DANA GIOIA

Restoring an Original



Benjamin Franklin: An American Life, by Walter Isaacson (Simon & Schuster, 608 pp., $30)

TRACY LEE SIMMONS

When Thomas Jefferson first presented himself at Versailles in 1784, one observer wrote that the spectacle of John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, and Jefferson at court put him in mind of nothing so much as a cannonball, a teapot, and a candlestick. The comparisons worked because they referred to the commonest of objects. The American Founders have strutted before history ever since not only as indispensable patriarchs, but also as representative American types. They were us, in essence, only more so.

Benjamin Franklin, though, stood alone. He always has. Yet he has not stood aloof. Washington was carved from marble; Hamilton is deemed the unlikely offshore prodigy; Adams seems faintly dynastic and remote; Jefferson glides across the stage as the original philosopher-prince. But Franklin is set off, a folksy sage beside an elite clique of soldiers and savants. He seems both below and above all these luminaries,

Mr. Simmons is the author of *Climbing Parnassus: A New Apologia for Greek and Latin*, and director of the Dow Journalism Program at Hillsdale College.

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both less and more. He's the man of humble stock who rose to the greatest heights by dint of genius and grit, reminding us all of the boons to be accrued from American industry, thrift, and a little native optimism. There's something quaintly accessible about this original Can-Do American. Franklin is, as Walter Isaacson says, the Founder who "winks" at us.

Or so it seems to us now. During his own life, Franklin was one of the most famous men in the world. It's instructive to see why. After taking up his ambassadorial duties in Paris in 1776, he came to stand—particularly in some stale, bored, and hidebound European minds—for that extravagant flowering of humanity that the New World had finally brought forth after more than a century of frontier austerities and colonial subjection. He was Rousseau's man of nature come to life, a common man in common clothes speaking common words who had been spared the sophisticated corruptions of civilization. His portly image appeared on snuffboxes, statuettes, lithographs, and medals. He was Revolutionary Man become Republican Man. Both his scientific inventiveness and his political audacity elevated him into an empyrean of statesmen, tinkerers, and dreamers. He seemed to live many incarnations simultaneously: inventor, publisher, writer, statesman, diplomat. The epigram attributed to Turgot got around: "He seized the lightning from the sky and the scepter from the tyrants." What was more, it was believed. Not fulsomely did Jefferson say, when he came to replace Franklin in Paris, "No one can replace him, Sir, I am only his successor."

While Franklin's is the kind of life ever ripe for biographical treatment in a country enamored of its beginnings, his is not the stuff—à la Jefferson—of incessant new exposés, which is odd, given his visibility and importance, not to mention his own share of juicy scandal. Nonetheless, the loss probably isn't great. His story needs telling only once every generation—though no less. Of such men we need reminding.

Walter Isaacson, formerly of *Time* and CNN, is as good a candidate as any to give Franklin's life a fair shot, and, as this new book proves, much better than many. Scholars would write mere scholarship; Isaacson has written a biography worthy of its subject, with a plain, straightforward tone that its subject would likely have approved. This volume is well documented, but it also saunters, making it both diverting and informative.

Most of this biography moves at a leisurely pace. We follow Franklin's birth in Boston in 1706, the son of a tallow chandler, through his early success at the Boston Latin School. He dropped out of school at age ten; we then see the young polymath teaching himself to write by imitating Addison and Steele's *Spectator* volumes. We see him through his harsh servitude as a printer's apprentice to his brother on the *New England Courant*, to the day he struck out on his own, practically penniless, for Philadelphia, which was when his troubles really began. And so on, all the way to international fame, through many reversals of fortune that would have destroyed lesser men. It's a good yarn.

Franklin thought virtue thrived best with the middle class. The challenge was to encourage that class to embody the virtues he extolled.

Yet this book doesn't come entirely without serious, academic-like aspirations. Isaacson tells us that Franklin set out quite consciously to "create a new American archetype": the proud self-made man. This may be true. Franklin certainly sought to promote a strong, solid middle class, and he lived to see growing middling prosperity in the one country for which he seemed supremely fit. He thought virtue thrived best with that middle class of shopkeepers and farmers. The challenge, of course, was to encourage that class to embody the virtues he extolled, lest it be reduced to crass commercial appetites.

This challenge Franklin met early on when, from 1732 to 1758, he published *Poor Richard's Almanack*, studded with homespun advice for this burgeoning class; its echoes reverberate in the self-help section of every bookstore today. "Early to bed and early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise." "God helps them that help themselves." "Experience keeps a dear school, but

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—Norman Podhoretz

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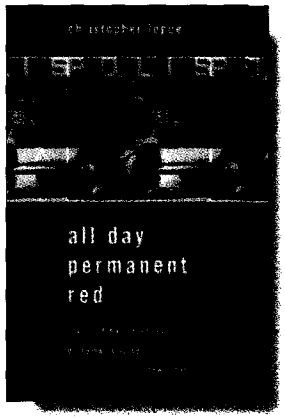
fools will learn in no other." These axioms every schoolchild once knew, before Dewey. And some nuggets of advice seem, to the modern sensibility, downright greedy, though they lose nothing in spiky humor. "There are three faithful friends—an old wife, an old dog, and ready money." "Where there's marriage, without love, there will be love without marriage." "Keep your eyes wide open before marriage, half shut afterwards." Try to find these sentences stuck to refrigerator doors now out in Westchester.

Nonetheless, there's another side to this pithy guidance. We're reminded that his advice was directed mostly at those swayed only marginally or not at all by religious tenets, to an America where the sermons of Puritans had already been drowned out. Franklin was far from an orthodox Christian; his fundamental secularity, in fact, has provided an enduring source of consternation over Franklin's influence for 200 years. He may be a lovable gent now, but many have seen within him seeds of everything that would go wrong with the American experiment. Placed in opposition to Jonathan Edwards, Franklin loses the Sunday school crowd but, for better or worse, wins the future. His belief in God was distantly philosophical, not personal and devotional; he saw the coming dominance of the cash nexus and salvation in a self-starting mercantilism. *The Nation* (perhaps oversimplifying the matter a bit) held, in 1868, that all mankind might justly be divided between lovers and haters of Benjamin Franklin.

For these reasons, Isaacson thinks Franklin isn't quite as much like the rest of us as we have assumed. He's what some of us Americans wish we still were—and maybe what a few of us wish we weren't. Emerson best summed up the uneasiness of those who examine Franklin's life closely and without sentimentality. "Franklin was one of the most sensible men that ever lived," he once said, being "more useful, more moral and more pure" than most of his fellow citizens—but he "savors of nothing heroic." Perhaps only the great can inspire this kind of ambivalence. **NR**

The Bloodstained Rise



All Day Permanent Red: The First Battle Scenes of Homer's Iliad *Rewritten*, by Christopher Logue (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 64 pp., $18)

ANDREW STUTTAFORD

CHRISTOPHER LOGUE has been a dealer in stolen property (briefly), a prisoner in a Crusader castle (16 months), a pornographer (the book *Lust*), and, probably no less discreditably, an actor, a poet, and a writer of screenplays. As if this weren't enough, for over four decades this versatile Englishman has been engaged in a "reworking" of the *Iliad*. It is not, he is at pains to stress, a translation (he knows no Greek), but an episodic "account" of the ancient epic that has already taken far longer to produce than Troy took to fall.

And, as you read those words, I can hear you sigh. The prospect of yet another tawdry modernization of a classic that needs none seems like nothing to look forward to. Our age often shows itself too restless, unimaginative, and self-important to attempt a genuine understanding of our culture's past. Hot in the pursuit of some imagined relevance, we are forever reinterpreting and updating, here *The Tempest* as an allegory of slavery, there a few nipples to spice up that boring old Jane Austen. And if, in the process, the sense of the original is lost, we shrug, and settle for what is left: deracinated pap, bland at best, topically—and inconsequentially—"controversial" at worst. Only later do we bother to wonder where our literature has disappeared to.

Mr. Stuttaford is a contributing editor of National Review Online.

But *All Day Permanent Red* is very different from the usual dross. Logue's previous work on the *Iliad* has been called a masterpiece (Henry Miller, not always a reliable source, described an early section as better than Homer): a devalued term these days, but, in this case, well deserved. *All Day Permanent Red* is the latest chapter and it doesn't disappoint. Here is Logue's description of the Greek soldiers rising to face their Trojan opponents:

> Think of a raked sky-wide Venetian
> blind.
> Add the receding traction of its slats
> Of its slats of its slats as a hand draws it
> up.
> Hear the Greek army getting to its feet.
>
> Then of a stadium when many boards are
> raised
> And many faces change to one vast face.
> So, where there were so many masks,
> Now one Greek mask glittered from strip
> to ridge.

In earlier installments—*War Music* (1981), *Kings* (1991), and *The Husbands* (1994)—Logue darted in and out of Homer's chronology, starting with the death of Patroclus and the return of Achilles, then taking his readers back to the early quarrels between Agamemnon and Achilles, and then on to the single combat between wronged Menelaus and spoiled, lethal Paris. In *All Day Permanent Red* (the title is, wonderfully, borrowed from an advertisement for lipstick), Logue takes a step back—to the very first full day of combat between the two armies.

The language is as ferocious as its subject matter and, in its cinematic intensity, it's easy to see the hand of the former screenwriter:

> Sunlight like lamplight.
> Brown clouds of dust touch those brown
> clouds of dust already overhead.
> And snuffling through the blood and

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filth-stained legs
Of those still-standing-thousands goes
Nasty, Thersites' little dog,
Now licking this, now tasting that.

But there is more to this saga than a simple recital of slaughter. The savagery on the plains before Troy is echoed in the heavens above. Nowadays we tend to trust in the benign God of the monotheistic imagination or, failing that, in the indifference of a universe that does not actually set out to harm us. The men of Homer's time had no such comfort: "Host must fight host, / And to amuse the Lord our God / Man slaughter man."

The gods of antiquity were capricious, selfish, and vain, playground bullies or the smug members of the smart set in a high-school movie, monsters as often as they were saviors. Pitiless, dangerous Olympus is a recurrent theme that Logue, like Homer, has emphasized throughout his narrative, and this new volume is no exception. Here is Athena's response to a plea for help from Odysseus:

Setting down her topaz saucer heaped
with nectarine jelly
Emptying her blood-red mouth set in her
ice-white face
Teenaged Athena jumped up and
shrieked
"Kill! Kill for me!
Better to die than to live without killing!"

Logue's language, both grand and, at times, oddly conversational ("Only this much is certain: when a lull comes—they do— / You hear the whole ridge coughing"), brings immediacy to an ancient epic. His use of deliberately anachronistic wording neither jars (partly because most English-speaking readers, including this one, are not comparing Logue's work against the original Greek) nor does it break that sense of the past that is no small part of the spell of a tale thousands of years old. And, yes, the references to Venetian blinds, plane crashes, and even an aircraft carrier somehow work in this tale of Bronze Age fury. Their very modernity reminds us both of our vast distance from this saga, and of the extraordinary cultural continuity that its survival represents.

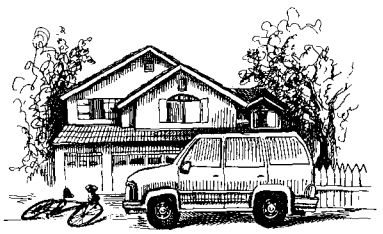
And if we want to understand why, beyond an accident of history, the *Iliad* has been remembered for so long, Logue's extraordinary, compelling poetry gives us a clue. The *Iliad* has as much to say about the human condition now as it did when Homer began to write, not least the destructive, glorious, inglorious love of battle that will endure until the Armageddon which, one day, it will doubtless bring about:

Your heart beats strong. Your spirit grips.
King Richard calling for another horse
(his fifth).
King Marshal Ney shattering his saber on
a cannon ball.
King Ivan Kursk, 22.30 hrs,
July 4th to 14th '43, 7000 tanks engaged,
" . . . he clambered up and pushed a
stable-bolt
Into that Tiger-tank's red-hot-machine-
gun's mouth
And bent the bastard up. Woweee!"
Where would we be if he had lost?
Achilles? Let him sulk.

A masterpiece? Of course it is. **NR**

■ THE STRAGGLER ■

Riding the Rails



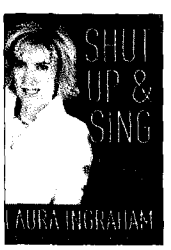
JOHN DERBYSHIRE

Off to a dinner date in New York City. This presents me with a choice: to drive, or take the train. My house is 36 miles from the Empire State Building as the crow flies, so I am far beyond the reach of the subway system. If I want to ride the rails I depend on the Long Island Rail Road. Driving in for an evening date like this one, I may be able to find a parking place on the Manhattan streets, but more likely will end up spending $20 on garage parking. Add in $5 for gas and I am way over the cost of a train ride—$15 round trip to Penn Station. On the other hand, as a driver I have my freedom. I can leave the event when I please and drive straight home. Taking the train, if I time my departure wrong, I can be sitting an hour in Penn waiting for a train. But

■ BOOKS IN BRIEF ■

Shut Up & Sing: How Elites from Hollywood, Politics, and the UN Are Subverting America, by Laura Ingraham (Regnery, 360 pp., $27.95)

In her new book, radio talk-show host (and former Supreme Court clerk) Laura Ingraham takes on "the elites." Elitism, she argues, dominates politics, media, academia, arts and entertainment, business, and international organizations (naturally, France's Dominique de Villepin is in her line of fire). But it's not just the usual suspects Ingraham has in mind; she also outs "Elitist 'Respectable Republicans'" who pride themselves on their "moderation" and "pragmatism" (watch out, Arlen Specter!). She writes on behalf of the disrespected "Middle Americans"—the ones the elites believe live in the "Middle of Nowhere," "flyover" country. Her perspective is healthy and realistic; she calls these Middle Americans "the kind of people who are the lifeblood of healthy democratic societies—the kind of people most likely to send their kids to fight and die for this country."



Ingraham's goal in *Shut Up & Sing* (did you hear that, Babs?) is to encourage flyover residents to know what they're up against and fight back—in other words, to make Democratic presidential wannabe (from Massachusetts) John Kerry regret the day he said, "I hate going to places like Austin and Dubuque to raise large sums of money. But I have to."

—KATHRYN JEAN LOPEZ

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then, on the *other* other hand, there is the near inevitability of a stressful traffic jam and a late arrival . . . I decide to take the train.

I can never ride the Long Island Rail Road nowadays without a smug, holiday sort of feeling. For seven years I rode the wretched thing every day to a job in Manhattan. Seven years!—more than *three thousand* trips on a packed commuter train, in full business kit! Now, thank God, working for myself, in my own home, I ride only if I choose to, and generally in off hours. I go to the station now like a soldier returning in peacetime to one of his old battlefields.

Battlefield it sometimes was. I recall at least two fights with fellow commuters. (The word "fight" here is to be understood in the context of middle-class suburban gentility. These were shouting matches with, at worst, some rude gesticulation, garnished with suggestions that the other party, being plainly too exquisite a soul to endure the conditions of a crowded train without bursting into tears, might perhaps be better off taking a coach and four to his place of employment.) Both my opponents were boorish idiots—Democrats, I feel sure. One was so obese he slopped over into my third of the three-across seat, obliging me to assert territorial rights by jamming my left elbow into his blubber. Another, seated next to me, leaned over to read what I was typing into my laptop computer, without even a pretense that he was doing anything else, and made a childish fuss when I told him to mind his own stinking business. *Militavi non sine gloria.*

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There were occasional fatalities, too. Anna Karenina's example continues to inspire, and more than once my commuter train was slowed or stopped due to a "fatal incident" on the track. One of these occasions was in the depths of winter, so that from my window I could see bright splashes of blood in the trackside snow as we eased past, leading to something hidden from sight beneath a bright yellow plastic shroud, something smaller than an intact human body. My homebound train was, too, one behind the train on which Colin Ferguson went berserk and shot 25 fellow commuters, killing six of them, in December 1993. Our train was held up for over an hour, and we had no clue what had happened, this being in the era B.C.P.—before cell phones. My wife, watching the TV news at home, was frantic with worry, though kind neighbors came in to keep her company. (Telling me about it afterwards, she reported that: "People kept saying the same thing: 'It must have been a black guy. If it was a white guy, they would have told us.'" So much for the careful sensitivities of the U.S. media.)

These commuter trains are, of course, little more than glorified subways. This is especially true on the L.I.R.R., which does not go anywhere. The lines north and west out of New York City were genuine railroads going to distant cities—Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore. Their commuter function was grafted on to a history of real locomotives hauling real people to real places. The L.I.R.R. never went anywhere, and there is something slightly bogus about its staff of uniformed conductors, its printed timetables, its high-flown announcements about "station stops" and "brake tests." Hey: If you're a real train, give us a buffet car. Otherwise, why don't you just integrate with the city subway system?

Even those better-appointed commuter lines going north and west are still not trains in the full sense. A *real* train has compartments and corridors. My English childhood was full of these wonderful conveyances. With very little difficulty I can still summon up the warm, dusty smell of the seat fabric, the little framed pictures of seaside resorts or mountainscapes that decorated the compartments, the fold-up tables you could race toy cars on, the strenuous finger-crushing maneuver with a leather strap that you had to execute in order to open a window, the drafty, ill-lit shabbiness of a waiting-room all fugged up with cigarette smoke . . . Robert Louis Stevenson's book *A Child's Garden of Verses* was a great favorite in my family, and we all knew the clattering trochees of "From a Railway Carriage":

> Faster than fairies, faster than witches,
> Bridges and houses, hedges and ditches
> . . .

My own children were denied these pleasures until we all went off to spend a summer in China two years ago. Then they savored the luxurious delights of "soft sleeper" class (two bunks on each side of a closed compartment) and the gymnastic adventure of "hard sleeper" (three bunks on each side of a compartment open to a common corridor). These experiences were, to judge from the children's subsequent reminiscences, far more thrilling to them than the Great Wall or the Summer Palace. They are spoiled for the Long Island Rail Road now, though. A weekend trip into Manhattan used to be a treat to look forward to. Now, they can't be bothered.

On this particular evening the ride into the city is uneventful, but I mistime the end of my date horribly, and end up with 45 minutes to kill in Penn Station. It is a miserable place, the one bookstore closed at this time of night, the magazine outlets patrolled by vigilant Pakistanis who stand behind you making dramatic throat-clearing noises if you browse a magazine for more than ten seconds. I slink off at last to the waiting room, just behind a noisy swarm of sports fans from some event at Madison Square Garden. By the time I get in there, all the seats are taken. At 11:30 P.M. on a weekday, I cannot sit down in Penn Station!

Glumly, a little tipsy, I stand there waiting for my train. My mind wanders. I recall a trip I made to Alabama just ten days ago. I had a rented car and drove all round the state for a week. Major sporting events aside, I was never once held up in bad traffic. When people ask me for my impressions of Alabama, the first thing that comes to mind is: "Wonderful roads!" I don't know anything about the trains in Alabama, but with roads like that, who needs trains? Someone remind me, please: Why do I live anywhere near New York City? **NR**

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WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY JR.

Bee Gee Wars

NEW YORK, SEPTEMBER 30

A BIG battle is shaping up. The major players are musicians and the industry that retails their wares, and the people (mostly young) who love the music but don't want to pay for it. The music industry argues that music is a form of property. Nobody would object to policemen preventing someone from stealing your Sony. So why should anyone object to policemen approaching Jane Doe to take her to court for having downloaded songs off the Internet?

On this quarrel I am an entirely disinterested party. Perhaps not to the extent of my friend, a distinguished amateur musician and doctor. We met recently and exchanged sheepish confessions of ignorance. Was I, he wanted to know, familiar with any of the names published every day in the newspapers telling stories of things like the Bee Gees and the Hellzapoppins and the Fires-on-Earth? The answer was no. Although, I said with wistful thought of rehabilitation, I once wrote an entire book about Elvis Presley. "Oh?" the doctor asked. "What was it called?" To my dismay, I could not remember the title until a half hour later, which was too late. On the other hand, my interlocutor confessed that he had not heard, before reading that morning's obituaries, the name of Johnny Cash.

Well, never mind us aliens. There is a throbbing demand for the music of the pop world. Enter the ACLU. The locus of the fight is Boston College and a student, called by the authorities Jane Doe. Ms. Doe, we are given to understand, has a whole library full of music which she has taken off the Internet and, conceivably, passed on to friends and, perhaps inconceivably, sold to non-friends.

The prosecutors are asking about her pursuant to responsibilities vested in them by the Digital Millennium Copyright Act, a law that gives copyright holders powers to pursue suspected infringers. But the ACLU is objecting, on the grounds that there hasn't been any due process observed. To isolate the identity of a consumer of Internet music is not the equivalent of subpoenaing someone suspected of stealing private property, they argue.

It does sound as if it were, but Professor Jessica Litman of Wayne State University deals nicely with the question. "She suggests," the *New York Times* reporter tells us, "that the comparison between privacy rights and property rights is the sort of thing that sounds good if you say it fast, but that breaks down under close scrutiny."

Ms. Litman scoffs at the idea that privacy rights protect any and all information privately amassed. "Property law, she said," the *Times* goes on, "is largely intended to make it possible to sell property, not to keep it secure. The property framework does fit intellectual property because those rights help artists and their representatives 'trade their art for money.'"

The stuff being picked up on the Internet is certainly copyrighted. And the Millennium Act seeks to stress the point by authorizing law enforcers to move against what, thieves?

Only in America!: a raft of organizations is at hand. They march under the banner of P2P United. That stands for "peer-to-peer." The general idea is that the browser who shoots out the latest Bee Gee to you is, really, just a "peer," talking friendly to a peer.

Questions before the courts: 1) Is your right to the information you have generated, or amassed, the equivalent of your right to ownership of the music, or literature, you have written? And 2) Do protections that are explicit or inhere in the Constitution, shield you from the official (officious?) curiosity of the Justice Department? Jane Doe will edge us toward an answer to those questions. And who will provide her with music in jail? Who will be her peer, the faculty adviser or the warden?

Odious Activities

NEW YORK, OCTOBER 7

BELIEVE it or not, there is a Canadian website called odiousdebts.org. It focuses on a question generally thought to be just over the horizon of public interest, but no longer. Concretely, should the U.S. acquiesce in the repayment of the debt Iraq owes to its creditors? An odious debt was defined in 1927 by the Russian theorist of international obligations Alexander Sack as one incurred by a "regime," not "a nation." When Saddam went to France and Russia to borrow money, was that money turned to the use of the Iraqi people or was it for self-aggrandizement?

The Democratic high command in Congress has joined forces with the White House in taking the position that the debts should be repaid. But that view of things hasn't been highly ventilated, and the political season is one that would certainly welcome a public debate on the question.

At the end of October, Madrid will host a conference at which the question will be discussed. One can expect that France and Russia will be there insisting that their loans to Iraq must not be segregated as odious debts, not repayable by the new Iraq. As things now stand, the U.S. government will simultaneously argue 1) that the debts should be repaid, and 2) that other nations should contribute to the cost of restoring Iraq.

If you participated in the Madrid conference, what arguments would you probably be hearing? The odious-debt people will argue that the $150 billion (the figure is approximate) was used by Saddam in hideously expensive and egomaniacal ways. They will argue that Iraq's natural wealth was sufficient to provide for any normal needs of the state, such as to guard against starvation. The oil wealth of Iraq is enormous, and it is this that encourages the bankers to argue with realistic prospects of satisfaction. At some point in the future, Iraq will be producing as much as three million barrels of oil per day. To whom should

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the proceeds from that oil flow?

Enter the U.S. Our government has not asked to be compensated for the cost of our military venture to effect the liberation of Iraq. But voices are raised asking why we should not take some part of Iraq's oil revenues in the future to compensate us at least for some of the $87 billion Mr. Bush has asked for to consummate the Iraqi recovery.

We do not know at this point whether the Americans will press beyond the moral point. That point looks Russia and France in the face and says: You should contribute to this Marshall Plan for Iraq on the grounds that you stand to benefit from a non-odious neighbor in the Middle East. A different approach, though it makes the same point, is to adopt the position that money coming in from oil revenues should be preempted to repay the U.S. the anticipated $87 billion spent on assisting Iraq.

It is no wonder that Alexander Sack, who distilled the odious-debt law doctrine seeking to protect successor governments from responsibility for debts incurred by predecessors when unrelated to national concerns, is a voice in the chanceries of power. It is a very solemn act, to repudiate a national debt. Russia most recently did that, when in 1998 it failed to pay a debt come due. To have a responsible reason for not paying a debt generates great warmth of mind and body, and the prospect of booting Chirac and Putin for their failure to cooperate with us in removing Saddam gives understandable satisfaction.

Castro's Mortality?

NEW YORK, OCTOBER 17

ANNOUNCING his new initiatives in the matter of dealing with Cuba, President Bush proclaimed that "no tyrant can stand forever against the power of liberty." Mr. Bush must have been making a biological point. Fidel Castro is not going to live forever, and therefore it is true that that tyrant's stay on earth is limited: by a congeries of organic factors that include blood, heart, and brain. A mortal development here would not make his death a triumph of U.S. foreign policy. Castro celebrated his 77th birthday last August. He had told the National Assembly in March that he would remain in power "as long as I feel that I can be useful and if it is not decided by nature before." By "nature," he doesn't mean U.S. policies.

What Mr. Bush did, on October 10, was to announce, or rather to reemphasize, three policies. There would be a commission set up to assist a Free Cuba. I.e., motions to help Cuba when Castro is ousted or dies. (One wonders whether these would include renouncing the claims of U.S. corporations whose assets were confiscated by Cuba four decades ago.)

Mr. Bush will enforce more strictly travel restrictions to guard against American entrepreneurs going to Cuba to do business, or Americans going there as tourists.

And Mr. Bush will continue to attempt to devise ways to get Cubans seeking refuge from Castro entry to the U.S. without requiring them to "risk their lives at sea." The policy would seek to cope with Castro's punishment (most recently, sentences of 10 years in jail) of Cubans who seek to emigrate, are caught, and repatriated. How?

Castro reacted to the Bush initiatives in a characteristic way. These policies, said the official Communist party daily, *Granma*, "have an electoral stink" that shows "the unlimited commitment of the American government to the extreme right and its obsessions with destroying the Cuban revolution's example."

Analysts of the political situation can't discount the whole of such condemnations of U.S. policy simply because they issue from Castro and his retinue. Mr. Bush's reiteration of the same old thing in respect of our treatment of Cuba can't be attributed to fundamental U.S. attitudes toward tyrannical governments. The tyranny in China shows no sign of ending. Mao has been dead for a long time, and we are into the fourth generation of tyrannical successions. U.S. policy urges trade with Vietnam, a tyranny we fought not by restricting tourist visas to Hanoi, but by dispatching 500,000 American soldiers to shoot North Vietnamese Communists.

Policies towards China and Vietnam evolved, but not policies toward Cuba, even though the worldwide threat of which Cuba was once a salient no longer exists. Why? Do those policies have something to do with "an electoral stink"?

Well, yes. Minority exertions on foreign policy tend to have extortionate effects. This is true of Jewish American influence on Mideast policy, of Hispanic American influence on immigration policy, of Cuban American influence on Cuba policy.

There is something of national pride also at work. We have been humiliated by Castro over forty years. We tried to invade his country and failed. We tried to assassinate him and failed. He extended his hospitality to Soviet nuclear missiles, very nearly precipitating world war. Add to this his personal odiousness in torturing and killing Cubans who defy him. I quote myself a few years ago, and reiterate that I would volunteer to serve as hangman if Castro were caught and sentenced to death.

But U.S. pride, brandished in Little Havana policy, doesn't make sense. Castro lives on, the penury of the Cuban people increases, and the only truth that survives is that Cuba cannot withstand one thing—capitalist intervention. But only Cuban Americans, apparently, can bring on such revisions in policy as would permit American enterprise to bring concrete relief to Cubans, through the capitalism that scorns the pretensions of Castroism.

This torch must be lit by Cuban Americans. That day is not advanced by political fustian that has got us nowhere in the thirteen years in which Castro has lived an isolated salamander in what was once the oceanic threat of a Soviet enterprise.

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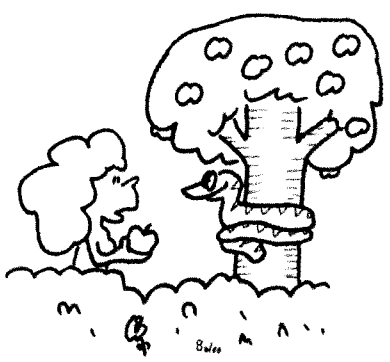

"Core values, you say?"

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happy warrior

MARK STEYN

Workin' the Jew Angle

PICTURE Dr. Mahathir Mohamad and Gregg Easterbrook up against deadline on opposite sides of the world. Dr. Mahathir is the prime minister of Malaysia and had to give a keynote address to the Organization of the Islamic Conference. Mr. Easterbrook writes for *The New Republic* and had to come up with something that hadn't yet been said about Quentin Tarantino's *Kill Bill*.

What to talk about? All-purpose answer: Jews.

Dr. Mahathir had knocked out a no-punches-pulled tell-it-like-is analysis of the Muslim world's comprehensive failure on every front—military, scientific, commercial, etc. But, aware that playing the Islamic summit circuit is like playing the Catskills, he knew he had to sing a few old favorites to keep the crowd on side. So he blamed the aforementioned Islamic failures on those sinister Jews. "The Jews rule this world by proxy . . . They survived 2,000 years of pogroms not by hitting back, but by thinking. They invented and successfully promoted socialism, communism, human rights, and democracy so that persecuting them would appear to be wrong, so they may enjoy equal rights with others. With these they have now gained control of the most powerful countries, and they, this tiny community, have become a world power."

That's the great thing about the International Jewish Conspiracy: No Jews need be involved. One day, there will be only one Jew left on the whole planet. He'll be a Dean supporter who mangled his chad and voted for Buchanan. But he'll still be controlling the Bush administration. He'll be a non-observant, self-loathing Jew who doesn't find Jackie Mason funny. He'll be the principal fundraiser for Islamic Jihad. But everything will still be his fault.

That's how devious they are. "We cannot fight them through brawn alone," Dr. Mahathir told his audience. "We must use our brains also." In fact, Dr. Mahathir's comrades don't use "brawn" either, unless by "brawn" you mean a West Bank schoolgirl with a Tel Aviv bus ticket.

But, on balance, that makes marginally more sense than Gregg Easterbrook's argument. How loopy do you have to be to sit through 90 minutes of an Italian-American video-store nerd's homage to Oriental actors celebrating their distinctive cultural heritage of slicing each other's limbs off and figure, "I think I'll go with the Jew angle." Mr. Easterbrook's line is that, while "there are plenty of Christian and other Hollywood executives who worship money above all else," that doesn't "make it right for Jewish executives to worship money above all else." "Recent European history" imposes a special obligation on Jewish executives.

Speeches and movies and democracy and whatnot.

Dr. Mahathir may not be strictly correct in asserting that the Jews invented democracy—they weren't big in ancient Athens, and there weren't a lot of Jewish barons egging King John to sign the Magna Carta, though some may have been married to pushy Jewish baronesses. But the general point that Jews have prospered by developing forms of universal appeal is a sound one, at least in America, at least in popular culture—Hollywood, Broadway, Tin Pan Alley. Gay novelists may write gay novels, African-American poets may pen African-American poetry, but "Jewish movie executives" just make movies. Poor old Easterbrook was criticizing Jews for not behaving Jewish enough (as he sees it) and wound up getting fired from his other gig at ESPN.com for the "perception" (weasel word) of anti-Semitism. But Maureen Dowd can criticize Clarence Thomas for not behaving black enough, and nobody ever demands her pretty little head. Excessive ethnic touchiness is bad enough, but excessive ethnic touchiness inconsistently applied is worse. No wonder it's reduced a big macho sports network into a bunch of shying geldings at a ladies' trotting race.

Unlike the hapless Easterbrook, Dr. Mahathir got a standing ovation from his 56 fellow leaders. He's one smart guy. He may be a light authoritarian, but his Malaysia is still a reasonably agreeable place. If every Islamic leader were like Mahathir, the *ummah* would be immeasurably improved. He can reasonably claim to be the most talented Muslim leader in the world.

But, Jew-wise, he's still bonkers.

And that's the point to remember. It doesn't quite put the soi-disant "Moderate Muslim" into the same category as the Easter Bunny and Santa Claus, but it does suggest that a certain modest level of expectation is advisable. Mahathir's plan (we need to embrace modernity in order to achieve our final victory over the Jews) is an improvement on traditional Islamic thinking (we reject modernity because it's a Jew racket). But it's still inadequate. I'm reminded of Andrew Roberts's recent book *Hitler and Churchill*. As the critic Philip Hensher put it, "Churchill knew very well what Hitler was like, but Hitler had no idea what sort of man Churchill was."

Exactly. When you read Hitler's private assessments of the man who stood between him and world domination, they're feeble: Churchill was "that puppet of Jewry." The Fuehrer was so overinvested in ideology that he persisted in jamming every square peg of hard reality into the round hole of his prejudices. Similarly, even when offering a sharp-eyed analysis of the Islamic world's failures, Dr. Mahathir is obliged to subscribe to the great all-purpose consolation: We're the victims of the Jews.

When it's reality vs. delusion, bet on reality. That proved true in the Second World War, and the Cold War, too. A culture whose modes of discourse are so hemmed in and constrained that all but received wisdom is beyond the pale is not a good long-term proposition. If the *dar el-Islam* wants to defeat the West, they'll have to wait until, via the sensitivity police at ESPN and elsewhere, we've defeated ourselves. **NR**

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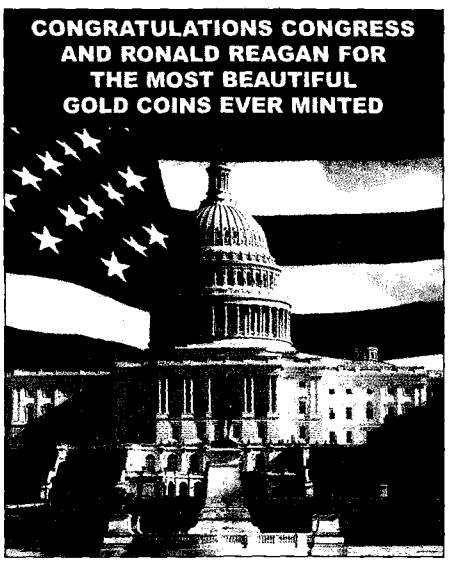

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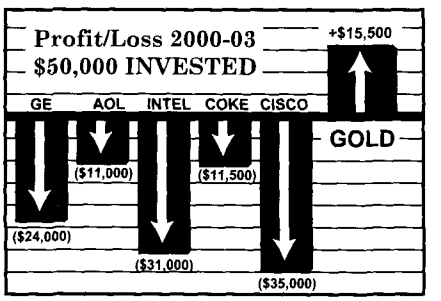

STOCKS VS. GOLD

Trusting your financial future to the stock market's performance has been a lose-lose situation for the past 5 years. In fact, the above graph clearly shows that $50,000 worth of Cisco Systems stock purchased in July 2000 is now only worth $15,000 – a three year loss of $35,000. $50,000 worth of Gold purchased in July 2000, however, is today worth $65,500 – a profit of $15,500. Gold has outperformed and outpaced legendary stock giants like GE, AOL, Intel, and even Coca-Cola. The Gold Market is on the move and is showing signs of taking off like a rocket. Do not wait to move your hard earned money into Gold.

WHY TO BUY GOLD NOW

- **Gold has outperformed the S&P 500 for the past five years.**
- **Smart investors are moving 20-30% of their assets into U.S. Gov't Gold Coins.**
- **This is truly a once in a lifetime opportunity to buy U.S. Gov't Gold coins at cost.**
- **$50,000 in U.S. Gov't Gold Coins could be worth up to $250,000 in the future.**
- **With the National Debt at $6.7 Trillion and rising, Gold has an upside potential that has not been seen since the 1980's.**
- **Due to very limited supply, a limit of 10 U.S Gov't Gold Coins per customer will be strictly adhered to. Order immediately to avoid disappointment. Offer may a withdrawn at any time.**
- **Special arrangements can be made for Gold orders over $50,000.**

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BEGINNING TODAY, TELEPHONE ORDERS WILL BE ACCEPTED ON A FIRST-COME, FIRST-SERVE BASIS ACCORDING TO TIME AND DATE OF THE ORDER!

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1 - 2002 Gov't Issue Gold Coin	$ 43.00
5 - 2002 Gov't Issue Gold Coins	$ 215.00
10 - 2002 Gov't Issue Gold Coins	$ 430.00

SPECIAL AT-COST OFFER LIMITED TO PURCHASES OF $430.00 OR LESS

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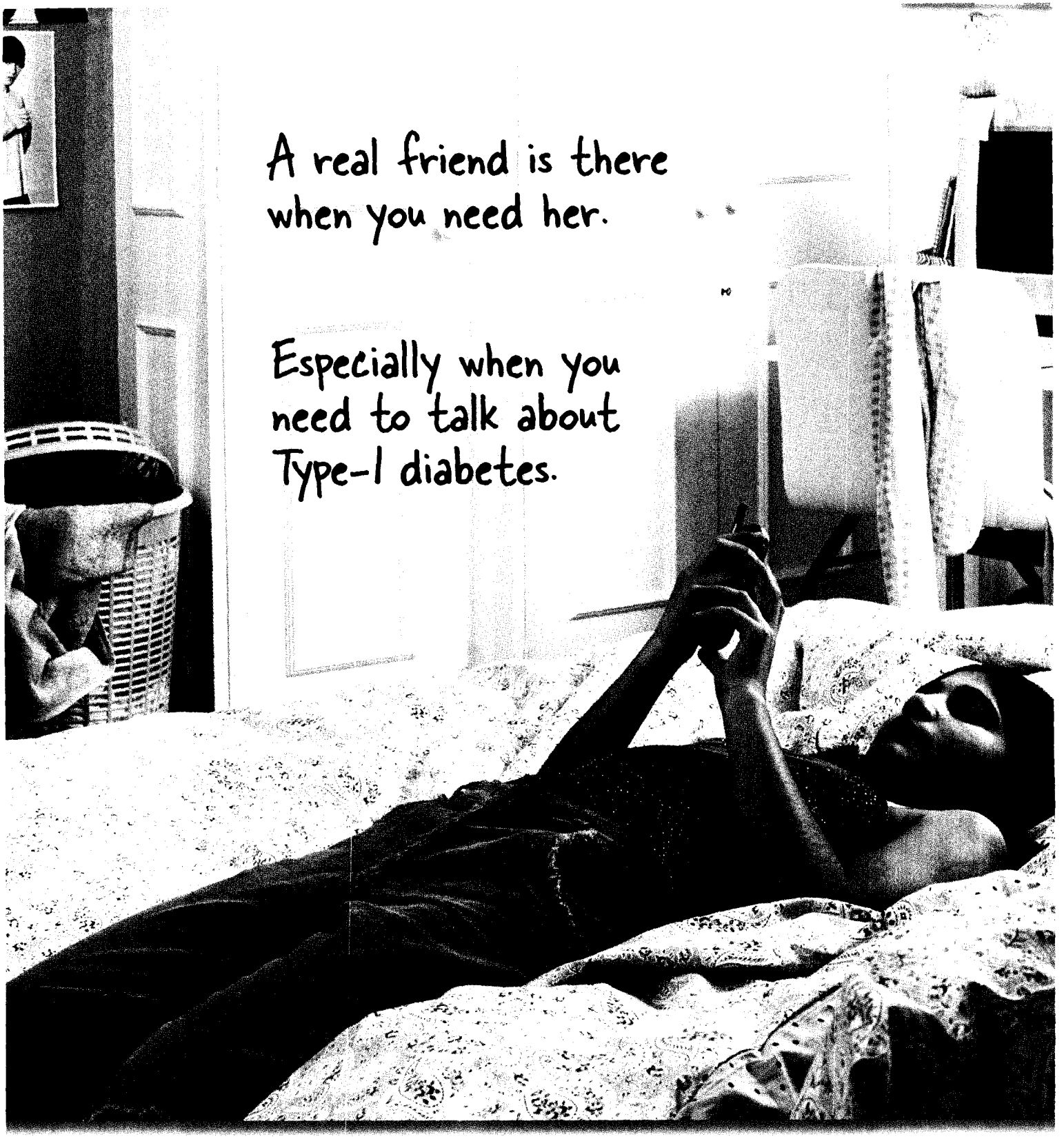

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